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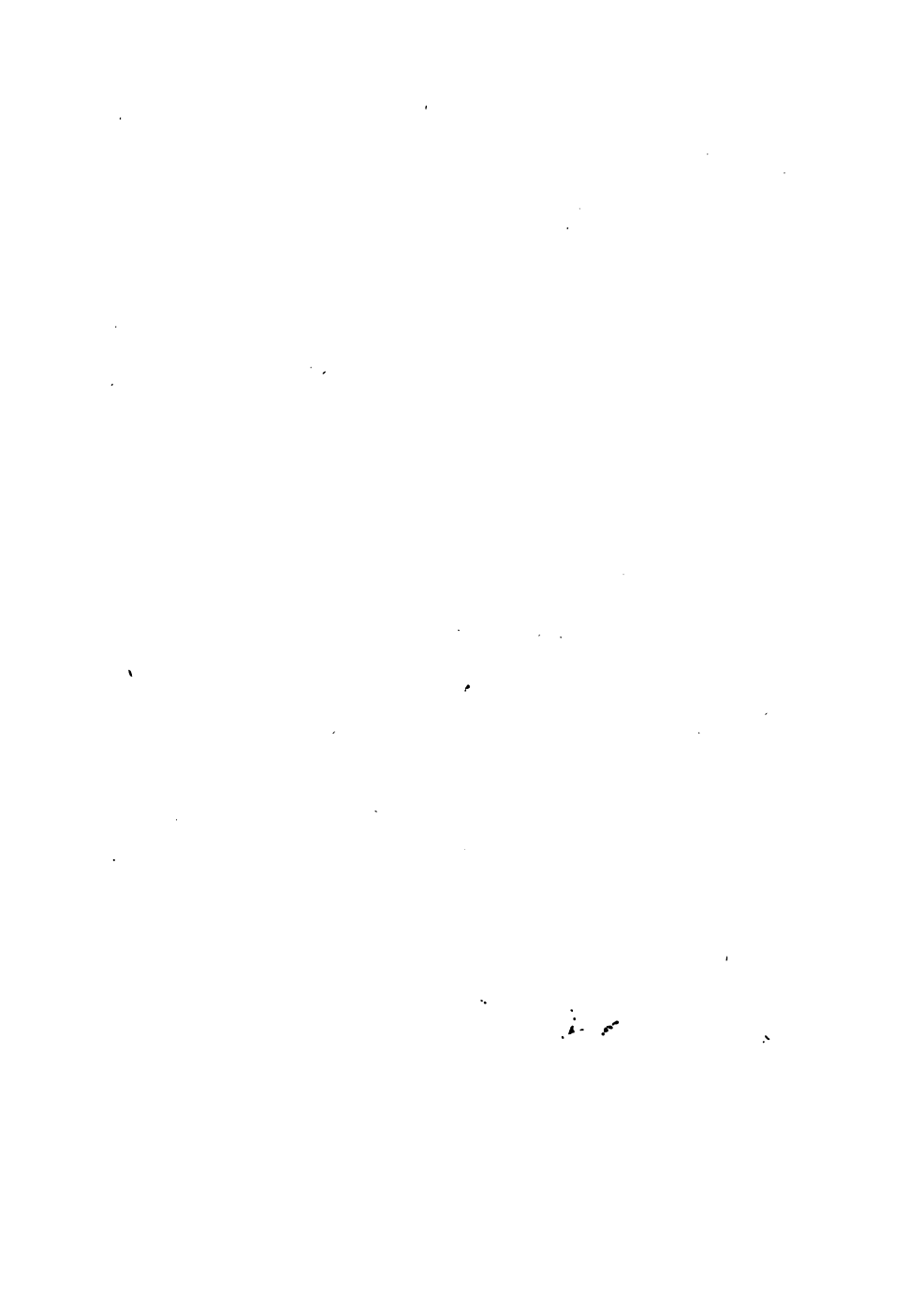
HOW TO TEACH
THE
NEW TESTAMENT



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RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE MANUALS
FOR SUNDAY AND DAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

HOW TO TEACH
THE
NEW TESTAMENT.

BY
CHARLOTTE MARY YONGE

[AUTHOR OF 'THE HEIR OF REDCLYFFE']
A TEACHER OF MANY YEARS' STANDING



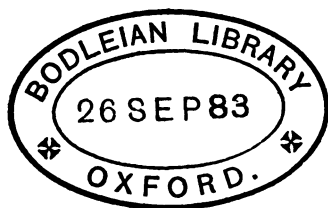
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HOW TO TEACH THE NEW TESTAMENT.

CHAPTER I.

OUR CHRISTIAN CHARTER.

1. **Introductory.**—Nothing can be better or wiser than what has been already said on Scripture-teaching in general, and on the need of due preparation, in ‘How to Teach the Old Testament.’ I will not therefore go over the same ground, as to the means of amassing helps and illustrations, but at once enter upon the distinctive points to be considered in teaching the New Testament *as such*.

2. **The Relation of the New Testament to Ourselves.**—As the very name of the Book implies, it is the history and contains the terms of our own especial Covenant. It is our own personal charter of liberty. It contains the foundation of all our hopes, without which we should be of all men the most miserable. It sets before us the supremely great subject of saving faith ; it shows us the means of salvation ; it displays to us the only perfect example of life, and shows us how that pattern may be followed ; it reveals all that we know of the unseen world to which we are going forward day by day ; it is the only key to the mysteries of life and death. We can best feel what it is to us by thinking what we should be if it were blotted out.

3. **Relation of the two Testaments to one another.**—Thousands of good Christians have lived and

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died with the dimmest idea of all save a few turning-points in the Old Testament ; but no one beyond infancy can be a Christian at all without a knowledge of the outlines of the Gospel of salvation. By this it is, of course, not meant that no one has been a true Christian without being able to read the actual book, but the faith founded upon it must have been in some manner conveyed to the mind, believed in, embraced, and acted upon. The New Testament is the complement of the Old, and neither can be by any means understood without the other. We see this truth repeated in many forms, as when St. Peter spoke of the prophets who 'not unto themselves but unto us did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel' (1 Peter i. 10, 11, 12), or again when the Lamb prevailed to take the book and open the seals (Rev. v. 5), that book which neither the learned nor unlearned could read in the days of Isaiah (Is. xxix. 11, 12). Any real study of the New Testament must be based upon the Old. We cannot even understand the need of Atonement without the knowledge of the Fall of Man. Nor, again, can we perceive the merits of Christ without knowing the perfect law, and man's inability to act up to it. Next, we require to see how the way was prepared for His coming by the selection of a peculiar nation and family, guarded and preserved from the general contamination by constant supernatural interference. Then the course of prophecy, constantly becoming more definite and detailed, has to be traced and compared with the fulfilment. Also we may dwell on the elaborate ceremonial system, exercising faith and training the mind to look onward to the coming perfect Sacrifice, the substance which cast the shadow; and the purpose of each of the details of the ritual can be shown, bringing home to the mind how truly the Saviour came, 'not to destroy the law, but to fulfil the law.' And again, the presages given by typical characters—the reflected images, as it were, cast by the Sun of Righteousness—need to be brought into comparison with the one

great Antitype. Persons trained in tracing such development can hardly fail to perceive the absolute unity of the entire scheme, and will both have their faith and devotion enhanced, and be guarded against any unhappy notions tending to depreciate the inspiration of Holy Scripture, or the yet sadder idea that God shows Himself in a different character in the two dispensations.

4. **Results to be aimed at.**—Let us then consider first what has to be gathered from the New Testament. We thence derive,

1. Faith.
2. Hope.
3. Love to God and man.
4. Example.
5. Prayer.
6. Rule of life.
7. Authority for all we are called on to believe and do.
8. The means of participation in the blessings of the New Covenant.
9. The foundation of the Church.
10. Devotional impulses, being one form of the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Our purpose in teaching must be to show the pupil how to obtain all this from the New Testament. Some portion must come earlier, some later, according to the age and capacity of the scholar, but the germs of all must be infused.

5. **The old System.**—It is a real benefit of the modern National school system that the multiplication of reading-books has prevented the Gospels from being used as a mere class-book for teaching reading. The cheapness of Testaments, and the comparative absence of hard names, led to their being thus abused far more than the entire Bible; and though devout souls, such as there were among both teachers and scholars, could read dutifully and be benefited by the exclusive familiarity with the holy Word of Life, in too many

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instances, only weariness and irreverence were the consequences.

Another error, nearly if not quite at an end, was to have a 'Testament class,' only using the New Testament, while the more advanced was the 'Bible class.' Cheapness and easiness, no doubt, led to the arrangement, and there may also have been the consideration that, if the child were removed early, the Gospel was the most important instruction it could carry away. But this plan had the disadvantage of occupying the more intelligent upon the comparatively less important topics, and leaving them to look on the greatest of all histories as something simple to be got through in the earlier part of their career.

6. Alternation.—The wisest plan would appear to be to alternate instruction on the two Testaments from the very first, giving perhaps the morning to one, the evening to the other in Sunday schools, or by teaching them on different days, or halving the time between them. There should be chiefly oral teaching for those who cannot read with ease, but those, who are able, should always be led to do something for themselves, and learn by the eye as well as the ear; and, in fact, our whole system should be not merely pouring instruction on our auditors, but drawing them on gradually to teach themselves; above all, making the book an interest and enjoyment, and not a task.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST TEACHINGS.

1. **INFANT** children come into our hands for religious teaching very early. In towns especially, parents send them not only in the week, but also on Sundays to get them out of the way ; and it is necessary to receive them lest they should be received into Dissenting schools. Training and association may do much for them, but it is only a precocious child who can take in connected religious instruction before four years old. They can be taught a little gradually about God and His goodness, be taught to say easy prayers and hymns, listen to Bible stories, and point out the scenes in pictures, while the general discipline gives lessons in gentleness, obedience, and reverence. In point of fact, unless teachers are so numerous that one can be given up to these extremely little ones, they have to sit by and imbibe what they can from the teachings of those a little their seniors :

Dull or unheard the words may fall,
And yet the heaven-taught mind
May learn the sacred air, and all
The harmony unwind.

2. **Young Children.**—In dealing with these little creatures, we have to take into account that they are (with comparatively few unfortunate exceptions) baptised Christians, admitted to the privileges of the Covenant ; and likewise that this may be their sole opportunity for the acquisition of the groundwork of the faith. The poor have become so migratory

that their families may at any time be transported to some place where Church teaching, nay, even religious teaching, is discouraged. Or, again, the little ones themselves, with their souls ripened early, may be taken away as buds to blossom above. Therefore, it is advisable to make the Creed our guide in teaching them, so soon as they can by any means follow what we say, and not to hide from them what is painful, still less what is mysterious. In spiritual matters, the infant, nay, even the semi-idiot, often sees farther than the philosopher ; and, at any rate, there is less disproportion between their comprehension and our own, than there is between ours and the incomprehensible. A child should know that Christ died for it, as soon as it knows that it is a mortal being, and that death is inevitable. The knowledge is often slow in coming to the carefully shielded children of happy nurseries, where years pass with nothing worse to deplore than the death of a puppy, and where, even if real loss and sorrow come, all the sad details are concealed from them ; but the poor make early acquaintance with mortality in its most grim forms, sometimes from dire necessity, when the visitation is in their own crowded homes ; but often from the love of excitement, and craving for sympathy, which make a sort of show of the dead face and the coffin. Therefore, it is hardly possible to begin too soon to teach them to separate the living self from the corruptible form, the coffin and the grave ; and to point the way to the sure and certain hope of a joyful Resurrection.

3. The First Stage.—The first positive instruction to little children might be in the course suggested at the end of the chapter. It has been made brief, lest the beginning should be forgotten before the end is reached. The best mode of teaching is by showing a picture, and either telling the history in our own words, pointing out all the details (if the picture be a good one for the purpose), or else, if we have an attentive and intelligent audience, reading the actual Gospel words, with a running comment of

our own, mixed with questions, or else going back and giving the comment and questions afterwards. It would be well to teach by repetition, or by giving to be learnt at home, either the most memorable text in the portion, or an appropriate verse or two from a hymn. If singing be possible, it should be employed, as it much refreshes and enlivens the children. Everything should be attempted which can make the narrative take hold of their imaginations. The endeavour should be to impress on them the Divinity, the Mercy, and the Power of the Blessed Saviour, the means of the Redemption, and our own concern in it, so that He may become the prominent Figure in their minds. For this reason the passages selected have included a few of such miracles as children can best enter into.

4. **Reverence.**—It is most important to use and enforce reverence. Having once impressed upon the children's minds the Human Name that is above every name, the teacher should beware of promoting the constant repetition of It, in reply to trivial examination questions, using and making the children use in preference the title 'Our Blessed Lord,' or 'Our Blessed Saviour;' and when the actual Name is spoken, the teacher should set the example of the grave lowered tone and the bent knee or head. Such observances are not only the outcome of reverence, but actually form it in the mind.

5. **Table of Subjects.**—The set of subjects here suggested will occupy half-a-year if used in a Sunday school, or a quarter of a year in a week-day one where the lessons come twice a week. Probably in either case it would be found expedient to carry the class at least twice through it, so as to perfect them in it, thus taking up the more backward and giving the irregular a second chance. In fact, some children would pass beyond it, but the class would not. In a Sunday school, it would be best to begin at Christmas, and with a little manipulation, to make the teachings come

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on the right days, filling up on the second course what had been left out before, and lengthening it, in the longer division of the year. We give, by way of pattern, a reference to the text fittest to impress, and likewise to the hymn verses that may be taught, read to, or sung with the children. The references to these last are in most instances from 'The Children's Hymn Book.' The first time, a very few verses may be learnt; the next, these may be repeated and the hymns finished.

1. The Nativity, St. Luke ii. 7-20. Learn v. 14, hymns 78, v. 1-2, or 82.
2. The Star in the east, St. Matt. ii. 1-15. Learn v. 2, hymn 93.
3. The finding in the Temple, St. Luke ii. 4-52. Learn v. 47, hymn 78, 3rd and 4th verses.
4. The Baptism, St. Matt. iii. 1-5 and 13-17. Learn v. 16, hymn 369, v. 1-4.
5. The Temptation, St. Matt. iv. 1-11. Learn v. 10, hymn 105, v. 1, 2.
6. The miracle of Cana, St. John ii. 1-12. Learn v. 10, last verse of 2nd Epiphany hymn, 'Christian Year.'
7. The draught of fishes, St. Luke v. 1-11. Learn v. 5, hymn 371, v. 1, 2.
8. The widow's son, St. Luke vii. 11-16. Learn v. 16, v. 4-6 of Burial hymn, 'Christian Year.'
9. Stilling the tempest, St. Mark iv. 35-41. Learn v. 41, part of hymn 370 of 'Hymns Ancient and Modern.'
10. Jairus's daughter, St. Mark v. 21-23, and 35-43. Learn v. 39.
11. Feeding the multitude, St. John vi. 1-12. Learn v. 12, hymn 347.
12. The Transfiguration, St. Mark ix. 2-11. Learn v. 7.
13. The Lord's Prayer, St. Luke xi. 1-4. Learn v. 9.
14. The little children, St. Mark x. 13-16. Learn v. 14, hymn 172, v. 1-3.
15. The blind man, St. Luke xviii. 35-43. Learn v. 42, hymn 20, v. 1, of 'Hymns Ancient and Modern.'
16. Entry into Jerusalem, St. Matt. xxi. 1-11. Learn v. 9, hymn 110.
17. The Last Supper, St. Matt. xxvi. 14-30. Learn v. 26, hymn 301.
18. The Agony, St. Luke xxii. 39-53. Learn v. 40, part of hymn 161.
19. The trial, St. Mark xv. 1-19. Learn v. 17, part of hymn 161.

20. The Crucifixion, St. Mark xv. 22-27. Learn v. 25, hymn 158.
21. The Burial, St. Luke xxiii. 50-56. Learn v. 53, hymn 59, v. 2, 3.
22. The Resurrection, St. Matt. xxviii. Learn v. 6, hymn 122 (3 verses).
23. The upper room, St. John xx. 10-29. Learn v. 21, hymn 122 (3 verses).
24. The sea-side, St. John xxi. 1-13. Learn v. 4, hymn 183.
25. The Ascension, St. Luke xxiv. 50, 51, and Acts i. 7-12. Learn v. 11, hymn 130.
26. The Day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 1-18. Learn v. 2, hymn 137.
27. The Judgment, Rev. xx. 11-15. Learn v. 11, hymn 52, v. 1 and 2, of 'Hymns Ancient and Modern.'
28. Heaven, Rev. xxi. 4, 23-xxii. 5. Learn v. 5, hymn 202.

6. Specimen Lesson to very little children going over the ground for the first time.—Picture supposed to be from Raffaele's cartoon. The teacher should speak conversationally and often break the narrative with questions. Here is a picture. What do you see in it? There are great birds in front. They have long necks and long legs. What are they? Cranes. They open their bills for food. Who takes care that birds get their food? What food will they get here? They may have some of the fish those men in the boat may throw away. How many men are there? You know Who this One is? I will tell you the history. This is a lake—a large piece of water between those high hills, very deep and clear, and with a great many fish in it. What did I call it? What is a lake? What were in it? These men were fishermen. Their trade was to do what? What were they? Now say their names after me. Peter and Andrew, and James and John. Peter and Andrew were brothers, and James and John were also brothers. These two younger ones are James and John, these two older ones are Peter and Andrew. They went out fishing. They had two boats. Peter and Andrew had one. James and John went in the other with their father. They used to fish at night. I think they

took a lamp with them, because fish come swimming up to a light, and then they could put down their nets to catch them. But that night not one fish would come. The poor men went on all night, and nothing came up. They were very tired when morning came. But there, on the bank of the lake, they saw a great many people, and among them the blessed One, Jesus, teaching. Presently He called to Peter and Andrew and asked to get into their boat. He sat down and told the people many good things. Then He desired Peter to take his boat farther from the shore, and let down his net again. Peter said, 'Master, we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing, nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net.' So he did as he was told. And, only think, directly the net was quite full of fish, so many and so heavy that Peter and Andrew could hardly draw it up. They had to call John and James to help them, and both boats were so full that they were quite deep in the water. Then Peter knew that some very great and holy One was with him, and as you see there—he was afraid and fell down on his knees before the Lord. St. Peter had hardly learnt to know Him then. He was not always afraid. Afterwards he was glad when he saw his Blessed Lord and Master. Now tell me, what have these men caught? How came they to catch so many fish? How long had they tried without catching any? Why did the fish come at last? Who had come to help them? Why could He make the fish come into the nets? If you want to do something well, whose help must you get? How can you get God's help? What are the two ways of getting to do our work well? To pray and to try. Now, did Simon Peter do as he was told? Now you shall learn what he said.

7. Showing Pictures.—This lesson has been made to suit the print because the latter is a very frequent one, and the birds in it always attract attention at once, so that it is better to speak of them immediately rather than to have

the children wondering over them. The children are very likely to seize on any trivial incident which we have hardly noticed in a picture, and the only way to manage is to let them make their remark, and answer it as best we may, before going on to our main object. It is the best way to promote intelligence and interest, and to get at their own ways of understanding things, but on this very account the selection should be very careful.

8. The Repetition of the Lesson.—When the course has been gone through, it will—as before said—be well to return upon it. This time it might answer to keep the picture in reserve till the end, and begin by reading the Gospel narrative, or, better still, saying it by heart to the children. The former knowledge of the subject will be awakened, and the more intelligent children will eagerly answer questions upon it. The same text and verse may be repeated. Some will have forgotten them, and the best scholars will need to go over them again. Perhaps it will be best, this time, to dwell most on the Almighty power, and also again on the being able to succeed in nothing without that help, showing how it was given as soon as St. Peter simply obeyed. It would only confuse the children to add a deeper lesson as yet. But if the twenty-eight Lessons here suggested can be thoroughly taught to the children between the ages of six and eight, they will have a foundation to go upon in learning further, and if by any misfortune their religious instruction should stop here, they will know something of the outlines of the Gospel as a whole. Or if they are drafted into a class where they have to take up the subject midway, they will know enough of the beginning to be able to join in their new lessons without leaving a blank behind.

CHAPTER III.

THE SECOND STAGE.

1. **Reading.**—Children of eight or nine years old are nearly sure to read well enough to be able to use the Testament themselves without stumbling or painful difficulty. It is desirable that they should begin to read the sacred Book for themselves, and see with their own eyes the authority for what they are told. Moreover, merely listening induces a vague, listless habit, and the utmost powers ought always to be exercised on sacred things. They should not, however, be made to read a whole chapter at a time. One definite subject is quite enough to occupy them, and the quantity should be determined by the division of the subject. From eight to fifteen verses will generally be found sufficient, being about the length of a Sunday Gospel. If there be more children than verses, the lower ones had better begin again rather than not read at all.

2. **The Subject.**—It would by this time be best to read a Gospel straight through, omitting the discourses. St. Mark's is the easiest, and gives the most minute detail ; but as St. Luke gives the childhood of our Blessed Lord, keeps the closest to the order of events, and tells more of the Resurrection, it would perhaps be best either to read his Gospel, or to use passages from it to supplement St. Mark. The Epiphany and flight into Egypt should be brought in their place from St. Matthew ; the first miracle and the raising of Lazarus from St. John. The longer discourses, such as the sermon on the Plain and the denunciations in

the Temple, had better be deferred. The Parables should be read in their place, if the children so know the continuity of the Life that there is no risk of their losing the thread by stopping to dwell on them. If the pupils are shallow, and untaught, it might be better to carry them quickly through the outline of the Life, according to the programme in our last chapter, and then to go back again and take up these teachings in their place in the narrative, which may be read from a different Gospel, in order to obviate complaints of sameness.

3. The Manner.—If the children have been accustomed only to oral instruction, it may be better for them to be gradually weaned from their entire dependence on it; the teacher first telling the story, then setting them to read it, and afterwards examining them and drawing out the teaching. They will probably be from eight to ten years old—an age when there is seldom much power of assimilating more than outward facts; and therefore it is better to lay the groundwork on which to build when the mind and soul shall be more developed. This is the age at which to teach that, in the East, roofs were flat, tombs were caverns, coals were charcoal, and loaves, flat cakes; and to impress what may be called a *workable* definition of such terms as *Pharisee*, *Sadducee*, and *Publican*. Every one has heard stories of the wild blunders made in consequence of this knowledge being taken for granted—how Pharisees have been confounded with fairies, and Publicans with inn-keepers. Even the word *Crucifixion* has in some cases been found to have no meaning attached to it in the minds of the poor, though pictorial representations are now so much more frequent that this can hardly be the case.

4. Means of Illustration.—Without letting the lesson degenerate into a merely geographical one, there should be a map at hand, and the locality should always be pointed out as a preliminary. Either a map will hang on the wall, or the teacher should have a Bible provided with one.

Nelson has also published a capital set on separate cards, which can be handed round. Much confusion and inaccuracy are prevented if by this means the children are thoroughly made aware of the relative situations of Judea and Galilee, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, &c., and are certified of the difference between the Temple and a synagogue, and that the Sea of Galilee meant a lake fifteen miles long. In teaching such matters landscapes are useful. Nelson has a set of coloured ones on cards, and there are also some in the S.P.C.K. Bible, in Thomson's 'Land and the Book,' in 'Scripture Topography,' and elsewhere. These do not exactly reckon as 'pictures ;' for children, as a rule, care very little for landscapes ; but, as a sort of map, they are most useful in going much farther than words. We must be prepared for the first attention being given to any sort of figure which the artist has inserted, and to have to suggest where the camel in the foreground is going, and what his load may be ; but when this is disposed of, the children will perceive that Jerusalem is a city set on a hill, and that Gennesaret lies in the hollows of the mountains of Galilee. They ought also to be shown some of those elevations of the Temple which may make them understand the arrangement of courts and so-called porches, or cloisters, where the teachings took place. Roberts's large print of 'Jerusalem in the Time of Our Lord' is perhaps the best realisation of the scene to be had ; but it is, of course, out of the reach of many. All teachers who have the opportunity should, however, study it with the key, by way of clearing up their own understandings. The little vignettes of Eastern life given in the S.P.C.K. 'Scripture Manners and Customs' should also be at hand, as giving great assistance in explanation ; and an actual article—such as a fragment of olive-wood, a carved shell from Bethlehem, a bit of palm branch—are wonderfully effective in giving substance and reality. These last, and any fancy picture of the scene, should be kept as a final pleasure closing the lesson. Where a

prophecy is quoted, or a reference to any passage in the Old Testament is made, it should be looked out and verified, so as to discourage the habit of replying, when asked where the words come from, 'Isaiah,' and thinking no more about it.

5. The Parables.—Each parable is amply sufficient for a single lesson, and it should be drawn out as fully as possible in description, *e.g.* the field with the four kinds of ground, or the Eastern wedding with its various ceremonies; after which, *one* obvious practical lesson should be deduced from it. At this age, one is quite enough; the attempt to go into another only weakens and confuses the first in the children's minds. Thus, the wedding-feast had better be interpreted as a lesson against making excuses, without bringing in the further similitude to the rejection of the Jews and the acceptance of the Gentiles. One or two specimens of the manner of doing this occur in 'Agathos.' A parable is one of the best portions of Scripture that a child can begin learning by heart, and there are little books, provided by the S.P.C.K., the use of which prevents the wear and tear of such learning from falling on the Bible.

6. Extent of the Course.—It would be well to let this stage include—at least the second time of going through it—the first twelve chapters of the book of *Acts*, missing some of the longer discourses. Even the first time, the history of the descent of God the Holy Ghost, the prediction of the Last Judgment, and the description of Heaven should never be omitted. The earlier events in the Apostolic history, as far as St. Peter's release from prison, are thoroughly interesting to children, and the sense of progress and of going on to something new is always helpful to them. It is not, however, desirable at this time to go further in the Apostolic history; for children are apt to become confused among the details of St. Paul's journeys; and those of nine or ten years old are hardly ready to be introduced to the Gentile world.

7. **Specimen Lesson.**—We will here illustrate our meaning by giving suggestions for a specimen lesson on 'The Miraculous Draught of Fishes,' showing how new ground may be broken, though still with the same subject. The children will have read the verses from St. Luke v.

Do you know where this happened? Show me on the map. You know that sort of piece of water is a—? Well, one of its names is the Lake of—? What are its other names? In old times lakes were sometimes called seas. What is the shape of this lake? Yes, it is about fifteen miles long and five wide—How many? It is a spreading out of what river? Yes, of the Jordan, between the hills. It is very beautiful and clear. Here is a picture of it as it *really* looks now. See how the hills shut it in, and how calm and quiet it looks. It is full of many kinds of fish, and there used to be many fishermen who got their living by fishing on the lake. One of the villages there was called by a name meaning the 'house of fish'—Bethsaida. Find it. What does the name mean? Some of the disciples came from Bethsaida, the house of fish—Do you know which? (If they do not, and can turn to a reference, make them look at St. John i.) The way of fishing was for two boats to go out together at night, with a net between them weighted with stones at the bottom. A light was carried in the boats; the fish would swim up towards it, and thus were caught. Now, when this history begins, what time of day was it? Yes, morning; and on the smooth, green slope on the west shore of the lake, who were gathered together? What had these people come for? What does St. Luke call our Saviour's teaching? Why? When people are eager, and there are many of them, what are they sure to do? How did our Blessed Lord get out of this crowd of people? Yes, He came down to the beach—it is a snowy-white beach, made of white sand and fragments of little shells, and there he saw the fishermen doing what? Who were these fishermen? How have we seen that they

knew our Lord? Though the word is here ships, what should we have called their vessels? Into whose boat did our Lord enter? What did he ask Simon to do? What is meant by thrusting out from the land? What did our Lord then do? Did you ever try to listen across the water? Then you would find that it carries the sound of the voice; so that the people must have heard the words of our Lord much better when He was sitting in the boat than when they were all crowding and pressing close round Him. Think what a wonderful sermon it must have been, with the morning sun beginning to come over the steep purple hills to the east, and snowy Mount Hermon's head rising up in the sky to the north, and the blue lake, with its white border, lying shut in by the green slopes, and all the people gathered together: rough men with striped mantles put square over their heads, and women wrapped up in heavy veils, and little children, all listening to words such as no one ever spake before. Why could no one ever have spoken before as He did? When He had done speaking, what did He bid Simon do? What do you mean by launching? What was the deep? What is meant by a draught?—Something drawn up. What was here to be drawn up? What was the reply? How had these fishermen hitherto prospered? Did it seem likely that any fish could be near? Yet how did they obey?—and what happened? So many fish were taken that—what was the effect on the net? To whom did they beckon? Who were their partners? What did James and John help Simon and Andrew to do? What did they fill? What is said of the ships? I do not suppose that they were in danger of going to the bottom; but that the weight of fish was enough to make the boats be much lower in the water. What did Simon do? What did he say? For what reason did he speak thus? What is here meant by astonished?—Full of fear as well as surprised. Let us see why. What had filled him with awe? What great proof of power had he seen? Then did he not feel

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that the Almighty was with him? With what feeling did that sense fill him?—and why? What did he own as to himself? Then what is the real cause of fear when the Almighty is felt to be near? Had Simon Peter had time as yet to know and love our Lord? Do you know how he met our Lord when there was another such wonder? Then we are told that he girt his fisher's coat about him, and came joyfully to his Master, for then he had learnt to love Him; and see what we are told about love and fear (1 John iv. 18). So what was cast out by Simon's love? Shall not we see our Lord one day? How then shall we prepare to see Him gladly and not in fear? To whom will He be terrible? Who will be glad to meet Him? Did our Lord depart from Simon? No; He had work for him and his brethren and friends to do. What did He tell them? What was meant by being fishers of men? What is the great net into which men were to be brought? (St. Matt. xiii. 47.) What is meant by that net? Who were to begin gathering people into it? So how were they to be fishers of men? What did these two pairs of brothers now begin to be to our Lord? What did they leave? Why was this right in St. James and St. John? Look at the collect for St. James's Day; look at the collect for St. Andrew's Day. Who had called them? And do you see how our Blessed Lord had taken care to provide for their families when He called these men to be His disciples?

Now let us look back, and see what thoughts to take home. Tell me what these men had been doing before our Lord came? What made them succeed at last? How, then, should we make our work succeed? How can we get our Lord to be with us and bless us in it? Tell me a verse that we can whisper to Him when we want our work to turn out well? (90th Psalm, last verse, Prayer-book version.) What is the way to make our work turn out well? Yes, to pray and try. I have heard of a dressmaker who *never* began a dress without a prayer that she might do it

well. There is the way to succeed. And now, what did we learn from St. Peter's fear? What did his fear come from? What casts out fear?

The children will, no doubt, remember all the better for seeing the picture again. They will have no objection to the old one; and if the cranes appear in it, they may be turned to profit by a remark on their being introduced (as probably they were) to show how the eyes of all created things wait on our Lord, also that these birds would naturally watch for the useless fish thrown away by the fishermen—an idea to be drawn out later.

8. Learning by heart.—If possible, the Sunday Gospels should be learnt by heart; but if any other plan be adopted, this age is a suitable one for making the children learn the Parables and the Sermon on the Mount. Nearly the same hymns as were previously pointed out will serve as aids, but now they should be learnt more fully, and to the end.

'The Children's Hymn-book,' 'Hymns Ancient and Modern,' the S.P.C.K. 'Hymnal,' all will supply many suitable verses; but there are others, more in the form of narrative poems, not intended to be sung, which can often help to convey the impression desired, if read to the children. We would instance Mrs. Alexander's 'Hymns for Little Children,' many hymns in the 'Lyra Innocentium,' such as that on 'St. Joseph,'—the awful one on Dives and Lazarus, beginning

Five loving souls, each one as mine;

'Sleeping on the Waters,' 'The Oak,' Bishop Heber's verses on the Holy Innocents, on the Parable of the Sower, on the Christian Armour. Bishop Wordsworth's 'Holy Year' contains many poems most valuable in the suggestion of thoughts to teachers and taught. Indeed, there are countless pieces of poetry scattered about which may give great zest to a lesson, especially when girls are being taught, if

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read aloud to them at the conclusion, or used to embody the description. For instance, in 'The Christian Year,' the meeting of St. Philip and the Ethiopian, the conversion of St. Paul, and the release of St. Peter, are all so described that children of ten or eleven years old will listen to them with great pleasure, and carry off an impression far more vivid than if left to the teacher's endeavours at description.

CHAPTER IV.

THE THIRD STAGE.

1. **Teaching for Senior Classes.**—In the third stage all that the teacher can possibly acquire of spiritual insight and intellectual knowledge will come into requisition. The course now beginning is probably the last the children will go through as children, and will occupy two or three years, or even more. Some will leave it incomplete; others, rising by promotion, will have to take it up in the midst; but if these last have been carefully carried through the preceding stage, they will bring knowledge enough to take up the rest; and in either case the work of a small portion thoroughly in detail is likely to prove more useful than greater dilution in order to make the course complete. The more favoured and regular scholars will be likely to enter on it at ten or eleven years old, when they are in the fourth or fifth standard, and will go on with it to the end of their school life, some going through the whole.

2. **The Subject.**—This course should begin with St. Luke's letter to Theophilus, at the opening of his Gospel; and after an explanation of the character and accepted history of the Synoptical Gospels, St. John's introduction should be read from the first chapter of his First Epistle, and the manner in which he fills up the narrative of the others should be pointed out. After reading his great proclamation of the Divinity of the Christ, the history should be taken up from St. Luke, and carried on through the Gospels, in order of time, choosing for reading whichever passage seems the most

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full, and using references to the others to illustrate it. It is true that no one has ever succeeded in making a perfectly satisfactory chronological arrangement of the events of the Life of our Blessed Lord ; but the three years, marked by their Passovers, form a sort of framework on which to arrange the events and discourses. Schemes suitable for working from may be found in 'The Teacher's Bible,' in 'The Gospel Story,' in Maclear's 'Class-Book,' in C. M. Yonge's 'Scripture Readings,' and in a series called 'Readings on the Books of the Bible,' in the fourth, fifth, and sixth volumes of Mozley's 'Monthly Paper of Sunday Teaching.' The papers in this latter on the Gospels are by the late Canon Ashwell, and are specially valuable. Some teachers read straight through each Gospel in turn ; but if this mode is the chief medium of instruction, a hopeless confusion as to the order of events is apt to be the result ; and it seems to me much better to work in the chapters of St. John in their right places. Some portions of the discourses in this last Evangelist may be omitted if the teacher feel himself or the children unfit as yet to try to enter into them. This course should likewise go through the Acts of the Apostles, bringing in portions from the Epistles when these and the Acts illustrate one another. It is desirable to do this, because some chapters in the Epistles supply omissions in the narrative, such as St. Paul's mention to the Galatians of his proceedings after his conversion, and also of the controversy with St. Peter. It likewise makes it felt that the Epistles are really letters, and shows their connection with the Church history. The course should end with the Second Epistle to St. Timothy, or it might include the Epistles to the Seven Churches and the final Vision of St. John.

3. Specimen Lesson.—To explain this development, and the manner in which repetition may be avoided, it will be as well here to give another specimen lesson on the same passage in St. Luke v. which we have before gone through. The place and the scenery may be dwelt on somewhat in the

same manner. If some remember the former description, they will be pleased to tell it, and further details may be added, if needful.

Then find the parallel passages, St. Matthew v. 18, St. Mark i. 16. These relate the call, but not the miracle. We know that all our Lord did was not told, from absolute want of space (see St. John xxi. 22) ; but St. Luke's special delight is in showing our Lord's acts of mercy. How was this a marked era in the Gospel history? As being the first call of the disciples to become His followers and leave their occupations. How had He already become known to them? (refer back to St. John i., if needful, but it ought to be fresh in the memory.) How had St. John and St. Andrew learnt that first night to know our Lord? Had they required miracles? Had they witnessed any since? They seem, however, to have returned to their occupations, but now that the Saviour had proclaimed His mission at Nazareth (Luke iv.) He was beginning to collect and train, as it were, his band of followers, who were to become Apostles. How did He provide for the needs of the two families when thus calling the men away? (The simpler teaching may be gone through again, if younger scholars need it.) What did He say that He would make them? To what prophecy does this refer? Ezek. xlvii. 10. And how is the similitude dwelt on? Matt. xiii. 47, 48, 49. What, then, is the net? And who are the fish? The early Christians dwelt so much on this likeness that they used the fish as the emblem of a Christian, dwelling ever, like the fish in Ezekiel's prophecy, in the all-healing and purifying waters which issued from the Sanctuary. We must remember that the likeness fails in that the actual net catches to kill, but the net of the Church catches to keep alive and preserve. The fishers of men gather in souls that they may be kept together by the net in the Waters of Life, as described in Ezek. xlvii. 11, 12. Observe, the parables of our Lord are actual facts, and, again, His doings have mystic meanings, and are parables like the types of old. So we

shall understand more of the teaching of this miracle, if we compare it with a similar one wrought long after on this same lake. Refer to St. John xxi. When did that miracle take place? Then the differences—the Lord on the shore instead of the ship—the net unbroken, the fish numbered; then explain that the first miracle seems to mean gathering into the outward Church visible—the breaking net showing the rents and schisms in the Church; while the second, after the Resurrection, would be the gathering in of the Invisible Church on the shore of Eternal Life, all sound and perfect, the net unbroken.

PRACTICAL LESSONS.—I. The long, patient toil at last rewarded.

2. The unquestioning obedience.
3. Success only coming through our Lord.
4. The Ministry are the chief fishers.
5. But we are all fishers of men through influence, example, authority.
6. May we all come and bring others to the Water of Life!
7. May we keep the unity of the Spirit, and reach the shore at last!

'The Christian Year' Hymn for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity would probably be fairly understood and liked if read after such a lesson. As classes are constituted, the instruction would very probably require to be in part what has been suggested as a lesson in the second period, which, indeed, would come from the mouths of the more advanced as response to examination, and this might be finished up with the fuller teaching, according as they are able to enter into it.

4. Teaching with relation to the Old Testament.

—It will have been observed that use has here been made of the prophet Ezekiel. Nothing is more important than to keep the Old Testament well in view throughout. Not

only is its devotional use thus drawn out, but the mind is thoroughly, though unconsciously, convinced of the essential Divine unity of authorship and conception, worked out through many hands, and thus a powerful defence is provided against one form of the cavils of scepticism. It should be borne in on our scholars by every means that the New Testament is the completion of the Old.

5. **The Prophecies.**—It has been said that in the second period each quoted prophecy should be thoroughly traced home, but in the third period there is no need to rest with these. *E.g.*, in the second period the children, when studying the coming of the wise men, would of course refer to Micah v. 2, and afterwards to Jeremiah xxxi. 15. And these should be referred to, and dwelt on again in the next period, but to them may be added Num. xxiv. 17; Psalm lxxii. 10, 11, and Isaiah lx. 3, and it should be explained that these are not mere chance allusions caught up from some similarity of expression, but that though spoken of a type immediately coming, they were often made far too strong in language to suit the first fulfilment, in order that they might meet the future one. Thus Balaam's Sceptre and Star smiting the corners of Moab and destroying the children of Sheth (or confusion) at first probably meant the royal power of the kingdom of Judea, but the memory of it perhaps lingered in the prophet's own country of Mesopotamia to assist in guiding the wise men, and its full meaning is shown in Rev. xxii. 16. Again, the seventy-second Psalm no doubt referred to Solomon's glory and the visit of the Queen of Sheba; but Solomon was a type of the Prince of Peace, and to Him the prophecy fully applied. Micah probably meant Hezekiah as the coming ruler from Bethlehem, but his words, 'Whose goings are from everlasting' mark his prophecy as Messianic. So Jeremiah, in consoling the women of Bethlehem under the name of their mother Rachel, whose tomb was among them, when they saw their children driven away into captivity at Babylon, prophesies how the future mothers shall weep for their mur-

dered babes, but how these 'flowers of martyrdom' shall meet them on their own border, the shore of Heaven. Even if our pupils do not afterwards recollect every prophecy we have shown them, the very fact of having referred to it serves to impress them with the mass of evidence borne by the Old Testament to the New, and teaches that 'the testimony of JESUS is the spirit of prophecy.'

6. The Types.—Type is thus intimately connected with prophecy. In the last generation there was a tendency to dread the dwelling much on types, lest it should lead to mysticism and triviality. The Rev. C. Le Bas indeed actually spoke, in his little book, as if it were presumptuous to accept any not thus quoted in Holy Writ; but this would be contrary to the whole teaching of past ages, nay, of our own Church, and would deprive the Old Testament of much of its significance. Therefore, as, in reading the Old Testament, we should trace the type to the antitype, and lead from Isaac bearing the wood, laid on it, and given back from the dead 'in a figure,' to Christ bearing the cross, stretched on it, actually sacrificed and dead, and restored to His Father; so should we, when reading of Calvary, look back to Moriah, and retrace the similarities, as the Good Friday Lessons lead us to do. Old illuminators were wont to indicate the types around the portrayal of the antitype, and this is carried on even as late as the bordering of a Prayer-book of Queen Elizabeth's, where each Gospel scene is between two Old Testament ones, and also has two prophets, each with a sentence testifying to the event. For instance, the Annunciation would have the visit of the Three to Sarah, and Hannah's prayer, with the promise to David and the prophecy of Isaiah. It is an exceedingly suggestive study. Of course, such tracings must be done with judgment; for some people, even past the age of childhood, are bewildered by finding that there is any meaning beyond the direct one, and others feel as if allegorising a fact made it unreal; but there are many more who

delight in having such a key to the wonders and depths of Scripture put into their hands, and who feel all the more how great is the Light that cast such reflections before it rose.

7. The Fulfilment of the Law.—This is to be traced in two ways:—1st, our Lord's carefulness to 'obey the law for man' (as pointed out in the Collect for the Circumcision), by His perfection in keeping the moral code and in His observance of all the Jewish ceremonies, such as the keeping the feasts, the paying the redemption money, &c.; and 2nd, by Himself accomplishing that to which all the ceremonies pointed, while training the Israelites. For instance, when teaching about St. Matthew xvii. 24–27, a shallow, thoughtless instructor would leave nothing but the recollection of a strange and unusual form of miracle, and at the utmost would simply take it as another instance of Almighty power. But let us see what real study will deduce from these four verses.

The Tribute.—It was not the tax exacted by the Romans, respecting which our Lord was afterwards questioned (Matt. xxii. 17). It was the half-shekel of redemption money. For the history of this redemption money, see Exodus xxx. 11–16. It was an acknowledgment on the part of the Israelite that his soul required an atonement, to be, in fact, bought with a price; and rich and poor paying the same amount showed that they are both alike ransomed by the same means. [This is the important point, but if there be time, it may also be shown that these first silver half-shekels were used to make the sockets (Ex. xxxvi. 24) into which the boards of the holy place of the Tabernacle were fixed, teaching how the whole system stands, and is, as it were, joined together, by the price of redemption. It may also be shown how, in David's reign, the numbering (apparently without the atonement tribute) was followed by the plague (2 Sam. xxiv.), and how, when David made the atonement for the people, it was accompanied with the purchase of the site for the

foundation of the Temple. All this, however, should only be shown to advanced scholars, not liable to be diverted from the main thread of the subject. For others it will be enough to show what the payment signified.] It must also be explained that what had once been an offering only paid when a census was taken, had been made annual, in order to provide for the restoration of the Temple set on foot by Herod the Great. As this was an innovation, it might be questioned whether our Lord, who was known to go farther back than the traditions, would consider Himself as liable to such annual payment. Therefore, the inquiry was made from St. Peter, as master of the house at Capernaum. Now, observe the question of our blessed Lord. The ransom money was a tribute paid to God. Now, of whom was tribute exacted in worldly matters? This was plain to all at that time, for the Roman citizens paid no tribute, but held it their right to be maintained at the cost of all the conquered nations subject to them. And St. Peter was fresh from the sight of the Transfiguration, and the sound of the voice proclaiming, 'This is my beloved Son.' Therefore, he could see in a moment that it was not a question whether the Sanhedrim had power to demand the half-shekel yearly, but that God the Son stood above all such payment of tribute or ransom money. Yet, as JESUS of Nazareth, He would obey the rule and not offend them, and this was done by means that asserted His Almighty dominion over the fish of the sea. The coin found in the fish's mouth was a Latin one, a *stater*, worth the same as a shekel (about half-a-crown), and thus it was enough to pay both for our Lord and St. Peter. Here we see the token that He paid the price, the full and entire ransom of others as well as Himself who needed none (refer to Hosea xiii. 14; Eph. i. 7; Rev. v. 9), and on that redemption all the Church, like the Tabernacle of old, is built up, Christ Himself being the chief Corner-Stone in whom all the building is fitly framed together (Eph. ii. 19-20). Therefore, our ceasing to pay

atonement money acknowledges the ransom paid on the Cross.

Upon its arms, as balance true,
He weighed the price for sinners due.

Again, the points in the ceremonial law, such as the cleansing of the recovered leper, the scapegoat, the details of the Passover, the construction of the Tabernacle, should all in their turn be brought forward to be lighted up, as it were, by that of which they were the presages ; and if the same work (only looking forward) is carried on while teaching the Old Testament, there will be a good firm body of Biblical teaching.

8. Similitudes.—Another point of connection that should be traced carefully is the similitudes of the New Testament; some absolute parables, others likenesses touched on in a very few verses. The Vine, for instance,* first appears in Jacob's blessing (Gen. xlix. 22), then in Moses' song ; with its evil fruits, the grapes of gall and bitter clusters (Deut. xxxii. 32) ; next, in Isaiah's song of the Vineyard of the Well-beloved (Is. v.), and in the contemporary lament and prayer in Psalm lxxx. 8, with its hope of the future Branch drawn out in Is. xi. 1 ; and the song of joy in Is. xxvii. 2, 3. Then comes the sad pleading of Jeremiah (i. 21), and the story of the uprooting and replanting in Ezekiel xix. 10-14 and xvii. All this will add infinite force to the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, and again to 'I am the true Vine' in St. John xv.; and the final judgment should be shown in Rev. xiv. 18-20. The poem on the Second Sunday in Advent in 'The Child's Christian Year' might make a fit conclusion, and life might be given to the lesson by describing the real vine and the vineyard ; and by speaking of the golden vine which covered the white marble front of the Holy Place in the Second Temple, with bunches of grapes made of precious stones, which were probably glinting in the full moonlight in view of the Apostles, as our Lord made His discourse on the Vine on His way from

the Upper Room to the Garden of Gethsemane. It is the more desirable thus to work out such similitudes that they give some acquaintance with the prophetic Books, which cannot come within the scope of narrative reading.

9. **Specimen Lesson on a Parable.**—We will take the Lost Piece of Money in St. Luke xv. It will have been observed at the outset how the three Parables here connected were called forth, by the objection of the Pharisees to our Lord's going among sinners, and how He showed in each that the very purpose dearest to God, Angels, and good men was to turn the sinner to repentance. Then may be described the value set by Eastern people on their coins ; how, no doubt, the woman viewed them as her jewels, and would have worn them over her forehead. The material of the coin—silver, pure and beautiful at first, and stamped with the image of the king, but easily tarnished, defaced, lost. The Woman, then, is the Church ; the coin in her charge the Christian, once pure, but clouded and defiled by sin (see Jer. vi. 30), then lost in the dark corners of the earth, far from the true light. What does the Church do? (Zeph. i. 12.) What candle does she light? Surely the Word (Ps. cxix. 105) and good example (St. Matt. v. 16), and the sending her ministers to seek out the lost. Reference here might be made to any incidents in Home Missions that seem suitable. The coin is found, it is washed by repentance, purified by the Blood of Christ, who Himself cleanses it, as a purifier of silver (Mal. iii. 3), till the once dulled piece is so restored that His own likeness begins to shine forth in it ; it shall be His, when He makes up His jewels (Mal. iii. 17). Or another line of interpretation may be followed, fitter for younger children and more personal, which makes the ten coins the Ten Commandments, and calls on us, if we discover ourselves to be going on ill, to search and sweep the house of our own heart by self-examination (here bringing in the last answer in the Catechism, and the words of the Exhortation before the Holy Communion), and having found

what command we are transgressing—since every evil habit transgresses some commandment, as can be proved by references to the duty to God and our neighbour—let there be repentance, and confession at our prayers at home and in Church ; let us listen earnestly to the promise of pardon ; and when we are striving again diligently to ‘keep this law,’ there will be joy in the presence of the angels. The Rev. Isaac Williams’s ‘Hymns on the Catechism,’ now unfortunately out of print, follow this line of interpretation in the poem on the Commandments.

10. **The Sermon on the Mount.**—There remains to be considered the method of treating the discourses. Of these the Sermon on the Mount, and what is sometimes called the Sermon on the Plain, in St. Luke, had better be studied together, and compared, as they help to explain each other. It should be made clear to the scholars that it is most probable that these two discourses were delivered to different hearers at different times, and that of course it would be needful to go over the same ground with new disciples. It will be well to make them look on these two discourses as proclamations of the Law of the New and Spiritual Kingdom ; answering, in fact, to the engraving of the Commandments, and the reading of the Blessings and Curses on the entrance of the Promised Land, under Joshua.

It is, perhaps, the greatest difficulty, in teaching about this Divine Sermon, that we are so much used to treating of it in detached portions that it is not easy to avoid a certain sense of desultoriness. Now, if we look on it as the Law of the Spiritual Kingdom, taking up and deepening the old Law, we shall obtain a clue.

1. First, then, come the Beatitudes, and in the other sermon the corresponding Woes, not temporal but spiritual (Matt. v. 1-12 ; Luke vi. 20-26).
2. Then the explanation to the disciples of their position (Matt. v. 13-16).

3. The assurance that the old Law is not done away with, only that the true way of keeping it is shown. It is the Law of the New Kingdom, but made perfect. (Matt. v. 17-20).
4. Specimen commandments treated of according to this deeper and truer interpretation (Matt. v. 21-37).
5. The Royal Law of Love of the New Kingdom (Matt. v. 38-48).
6. The Royal Law of Truth and Reality in all observances especially in almsgiving, prayer, and fasting (Matt. vi. 1-18).
7. The temporal rewards set aside, the world not to be considered, spiritual rewards alone to be looked for (Matt. vi. 18-34).
8. The fulness and perfection of these rewards, yet their proportion to our doings upon earth (Matt. vii. 1-14).
9. Again, the warning against trusting to outward show and observances (Matt. vii. 15-27).

It is the Law of the Invisible Church, the Spiritual Kingdom, and Truth and Love are its great features—absolutely sincere Love, and perfectly loving Truth.

And when dealing with the terrible final discourse when the trial of the Jews was over, and our Blessed Lord was for ever quitting the Temple, it should be observed and pointed out how closely the sins for which woes are denounced correspond to those evils which had been mentioned with less severity in the Sermon on the Mount, at the opening of the Ministry. The other discourses in the Synoptical Gospels, which are not chiefly parable and similitude, are the commissions to the Apostles and to the seventy, which are much alike, and should be read with frequent reference to the Prayer-book ; and the prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the end of the world. Much attention and comparison are required to disentangle what is said of the one from what is said of the other, but it is important to do so,

and to understand what is past, and what is future, and how the past typifies that which is still to come.

II. Discourses in St. John's Gospel.—There remain the discourses in St. John, with their more full development of the Godhead doctrine and explanations of the spiritual life. Two of them explain the object of the two Sacraments, namely, the conversation with Nicodemus and the discourse following the miracle of the loaves and fishes. The teaching given to the woman of Samaria begins the revelation of the work of the Holy Spirit, which also forms a great part of the parting instructions on the evening of the Last Supper. The underlying principle of the very difficult discourse given in St. John v., after the healing of the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath day, is the real cause of the change from the Sabbath observance to the joy of the Lord's day—from the commemoration of the Rest of the Father to that of the Resurrection of the Son, Our Lord thus proclaiming (as the Jews perceived) His own oneness and equality with the Father. The same great mystery runs through the discourse at the Feast of the Tabernacles on the Light of the world, and underlies that most sacred prayer in the 17th chapter, which we should decidedly never set an ordinary class of children to read as a lesson. They should only be told what it is, and taught to reverence it. The discourses at the Feast of the Tabernacles will be made much more impressive to the children's imagination if it be brought before them that the festival represented the life in the wilderness ; that the pouring out of the water (which, no doubt, gave occasion to the proclamation in St. John vii. 7) was in memory of the water from the rock ; that the Feast of Lights was in recollection of the guiding pillar of fire, and thus that 'I am the Light of the world,' probably spoken as the lamps were sinking in daylight, showed how that type was fulfilled in the Blessed Speaker ; and lastly, the sheep coming in at the door of the Temple court, to be used in the Dedication feast, would have been before the eyes of those who listened to the much-

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loved words beginning with, 'I am the Good Shepherd.' It should be borne in mind by the teacher, and, if possible, impressed on the scholars, that these discourses at Jerusalem were to a more learned audience than those in Galilee, and that in them our Blessed Lord revealed His Divinity and His Messiahship. This so inflamed the Sanhedrim that they, if we may say so, decided on His fate from that time forth. The great outlines, or turning-points, in the Life of our Lord to be kept in mind are these :—

The Childhood.

The opening of the ministry by the Baptism and Temptation.

The first Passover.

The proclamation of the ministry at Nazareth.

The call of the disciples, and Sermon on the Mount, with the ministry in Galilee.

The second Passover, and miracle of the Pool of Bethesda, bringing on the beginning of enmity.

The choice of the Apostles.

Ministry in Galilee disturbed by emissaries from Jerusalem and by the murder of John the Baptist.

The third Passover. The time of it is indicated at the beginning of St. John vi.

The confession of the Messiah by the Apostles.

The Transfiguration.

The Feast of Tabernacles.

Increased persecution rendering Galilee unsafe.

The raising of Lazarus. Our Lord's Death resolved on.

The final circuit through Galilee.

The last journey to Jerusalem.

12. The Events on the Resurrection Day.—One great difficulty that comes before those who try to harmonise the Gospels is in the narratives of the events of Easter morning, and commentators have from the first taken different views about them. I will therefore mention what

has seemed to me the most probable way of collating the accounts.

Mary Magdalene came first and alone, as related by St. John, and finding the sepulchre apparently broken open, hastened to call the disciples [for though she is mentioned in the much briefer accounts given by SS. Matthew and Mark, it is made evident by Mark xvi. 9 that she was alone, and that they only summarise the appearances of that morning].

While she was gone, Mary, sister of the blessed Virgin, wife of Cleopas, and mother of SS. James and Jude, came with Salome, wife of Zebedee and mother of SS. John and James. They saw one angel, who bade them carry the tidings to the disciples ; but they fled in terror, and told no one, being probably afraid that their sons might be exposed to danger.

After their flight, arrived SS. Peter and John, who looked into the sepulchre and returned, leaving Mary Magdalene weeping, until the risen Lord Himself appeared unto her.

A third party of women, Joanna being one, next came (being perhaps joined by Mary Cleopas). They saw two angels, who renewed the message ; and afterwards, on their way to the disciples, were gladdened by the actual sight of the Lord Himself.

The undescribed appearance to St. Peter, the walk to Emmaus, and the coming to the Upper Room, all occurred later in the day.

This way of explaining the four narratives will not satisfy every one ; but it is possible to work with it, if we bear in mind that the first two Evangelists summarise, while SS. Luke and John give details, but not always of the same incidents.

CHAPTER V.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

1. **The Acts.**—As we have already said, children of some intelligence can be carried in their second stage through the easier portions of the first twelve chapters of the Book of Acts. The third stage should include the whole Book interspersed with passages from the Epistles. If the Gospels occupy two years, this will take one. We are quite aware that drafts into the higher class will occur in the middle of the course, but if the children have been properly grounded in the second stage, they will be able to take the theme up anywhere. They are generally delighted to begin on the Acts ; they have long been occupied with the Gospels, and they are pleased with the new subject ; while if they are intelligent, they are anxious to know how it fared with the disciples when their Master had left them. And it is most important to read the Acts with them, for if the Gospels are needed to make them Christians in faith, the Acts are wanted to render them Churchmen upon principle. They will have seen the institution and meaning of the two Sacraments in the Gospels, and they have to be shown how invariably these were required from believers, and they will also learn the authority for the ordinance of Confirmation, and the commencement of the ministry from the Apostles. The sentences from which these most important conclusions are derived do not strike a careless reader, and require to be pointed out. St. Luke, in fact, took these institutions as a

matter of course, and thus only mentioned them incidentally—one of the strongest proofs possible of their universality.

The pupils with whom we read the Acts are likely to have some amount of intelligence and not to be in need of having the first foundations laid, as they will certainly have been taken through a considerable portion of the Gospels, if not the whole. Those of the third stage should therefore go through the entire Book.

2. **The Sin of Ananias.**—There is one point against which we would warn teachers, namely, that of baldly telling the children that Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for telling a lie, and thus trying to frighten them out of childish falsehoods, by a mere terror which will lose its force as they see no such consequence ensue. The autobiography of more than one person has shown the danger of this method. One tells us that being accused by the authorities of a fault she had not committed, and punished for the denial as for a lie, she proceeded to reflect that Ananias might have been as innocent as herself, and that St. Peter might have been mistaken, and punished him undeservedly. Of course such a notion could only arise in utter ignorance of the Divine power which gave St. Peter insight, and of which he was only the instrument, and probably the child's only knowledge of the subject came through Watts's hymn, and she did not know what the deceit was about. But such a revelation shows the danger of rude and imperfect dealing with the warnings of Scripture, for the actual sin of Ananias was utterly unlike those childish deceits which for the most part are prompted by a misdirected instinct of self-defence. It may show what I mean here, to select their history as the subject of a model lesson.

The reading should begin from the 36th verse of the 4th chapter, if not farther back, and the pupils should be reminded of the precept to the young man in St. Matthew xix. 21, and shown that the early believers, in their first zeal, acted literally on this command. They may be shown that it was

given to an individual, because his circumstances and character required such a test, but that the disciples evidently perceived after a time that it was not meant to be enforced upon all alike, though it pointed to the higher way. [Probably the fact that to enforce a high and strict rule of perfection on characters not ripe for it only drives them into temptation would be a thought above our young scholars, though it is a very good one for those in authority.]

Then the character of St. Barnabas should be dwelt on. His Levite birth, and his being a native of Cyprus should be noted, as these facts will be brought forward when he becomes the companion of St. Paul. His name should be explained as the son of comfort, or exhortation, as in the Revised Version, in connection with the title, the Comforter, which it resembles in the Greek, and it should be shown that comfort (at the time our authorised translation was made) did not only mean consolation, but also exhortation, strength, and encouragement. St. Barnabas being a man of wealth and consideration, and of noble presence (as was shown by his being taken for Jupiter), was much thought of, and his free-spirited sacrifice greatly admired. Ananias and Sapphira thus desired to enjoy the same credit. (The woe denounced on hypocrisy and the habits of the Pharisees may here be brought forward.) They also wished to throw themselves for support on the common stock of the disciples, while all the time they were keeping a reserve on which to fall back in case the new feeling should pass away, and the common fund be exhausted. Here one strong practical lesson, often much needed, may be given, on the sin and evil of throwing oneself on the charity of the Church without telling the whole of the circumstances, and on the whole habit of making a speculation of a profession of religion. Or, what comes home more to the present temptations of children, the taking more credit than one's due, especially when anything is to be thus gained. Mark that what St. Peter blames is not the keeping back a part, but

the pretending to give the whole. Observe on his ascribing the temptation directly to Satan, and likewise that the attempt at deception implied utter want of faith in the supernatural powers of discernment given on the Day of Pentecost. Therefore the lie was not to man but to God, and the unbelief was punished as well as the sacrilege. Compare the punishment of Achan, for taking spoil dedicated to God, and that of Gehazi, for likewise making his own profit out of Naaman's religious offering, and show the same Divine intuition on the part of Elisha. Therefore came the punishment to both husband and wife, St. Peter showing his knowledge that they had agreed together in the fraud. This might be the occasion of showing a class of girls how Sapphira might have used her influence to prevent the evil, but that she certainly agreed to, perhaps prompted, the crime, and therefore shared the punishment when she came in, expecting to be thanked and honoured for the false gift. The sin of falsehood may here be fully dwelt upon. And the theological point must be shown, the words God and the Holy Ghost being used interchangeably by St. Peter; and the summary of the Creed, and sentences from the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds may be quoted.

3. The Discourses in the Acts.—With a tolerably intelligent class, well trained in the Old Testament, it is not difficult to make these extremely interesting and profitable. They may be classified as those to Jews and those to Gentiles, and the difference should be well marked. First there are those of St. Peter, which are chiefly occupied with the immediate proof that JESUS, his crucified Master, is risen, ascended, actually sending the Holy Spirit and working miracles among the Jews. These are full of references to prophecy, which need to be well worked out. Then ensues St. Stephen's great discourse, the main argument of which is the reply to the accusation that he was 'changing the customs that Moses delivered.' He proves that from the very first the Israelite covenant was not intended

to be final, but only a preparation for something better and more universal, and at the same time that whenever a deliverer or great man was sent to the Israelites they uniformly persecuted and rejected him. The place where he was interrupted by the fury of the Jews is marked by the sudden breaking off at the 50th verse into, 'Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears.' In dealing with St. Paul's speeches later in the synagogues, it should be shown how he followed the same line as that of the argument which he had assisted in violently stopping short, and how we may thus trace the influence of the martyr upon his thought and character. The scope of all these discourses is the proof of the Messiah having actually come, that the suffering as well as the glory was always foretold, and that His Kingdom was to include the Gentile nations, and put an end to Jewish exclusiveness. This, as should be constantly pointed out, was the great cause of the Jewish enmity to St. Paul.

4. Addresses to Gentiles.—In contrast with these arguments to the already instructed Jews, St. Paul, when speaking to the Gentiles, only appeals to the natural sentiment of religion in men's hearts, and the yearnings, or, as it were, gropings in the darkness, after the Almighty. There is here the further difference to be remarked between his speech to the ignorant Lycaonians and that to the cultured Athenians, with their worn-out philosophies. It is to be regretted that so much exclusive stress is—in all ranks—laid on the knowledge of English history that teachers and pupils are apt alike to be ignorant of those historical facts concerning Greek culture and influence and Roman dominion which are requisite to a clear understanding of the state of things at the time of the Apostolic missions, and the *gist*, as it were, of the teaching of special Churches.

5. Divisions of the Book of Acts.—The first part consists of twelve chapters chiefly relating to the Church of

Jerusalem. Then follows what was evidently written from St. Luke's personal knowledge, namely, the account of St. Paul's mission and the histories of his three journeys, the first beginning in the 13th chapter, and concluding with the 14th; the second beginning with the 16th, and extending to the 22nd verse of the 18th chapter; the third beginning at the 23rd verse of the 18th, and going on to the 25th verse of the 21st.

Between the first and the second journey occurs the account of the difficulty as to the Gentile converts, occasioning the First Council, which was held at Jerusalem, as related in the 15th chapter, and in Galatians ii. 1-10, and the controversy at Antioch between SS. Peter and Paul, described in Galatians ii. 11-16. The final chapters from the 21st contain the history of St. Paul's capture and imprisonment. It is, of course, quite possible to read the Acts straight through with a class, and it may be better to do so where the time is limited and the scholars seem incapable of taking in much beyond narrative; but where they are able to go a little beyond this, their intelligent knowledge of the Bible, and power of going on for themselves, will be much increased by using portions of the Epistles in their places.

6. The Epistles used historically.—St. Paul's preparation for his ministry is very briefly treated by St. Luke, but he describes it himself in 2 Cor. xi. 32, 33; Gal. i. 15-19, and 21, 22; and again in his speech in Acts xxii. 17-21. The earliest Epistles were, however, written during his second journey, and when Acts xviii. 11 has described him as spending eighteen months at Corinth, it is well to read those portions of the letters to the Thessalonians in which he warns them against idly waiting for the Second Advent, which he so vividly describes. In his third journey, during his two years at Ephesus, may be read his correction of party spirit at Corinth in the 1st and 3rd chapters of the first Epistle. Other portions may be read, of which the most important would be the 15th chapter. It would be as well to follow out the repentance produced by this letter

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in the 7th chapter of the second Epistle. A sketch of the Jew and Gentile controversy might be made and the earlier part of Galatians iii. be read, but it will be better in most cases only to read, with the very young, in the Epistle to the Romans the part about the grafting in of the Gentiles (Rom. xi. 13-27). After the completion of the third journey, and the account of the imprisonment, leading up to the arrival at Rome, the Epistle to Philemon may be made very interesting and some of the direct lessons on the condition of Christians and their conduct in each station of life should follow, perhaps best from the Epistle to the Ephesians. The 'Epistle of Joy' to the Philippians may be so treated, especially the last chapter, as to illustrate the closer captivity in the Imperial palace. The opening of the first Epistle to Timothy may be used so as to prove the commencement of Episcopacy from the Apostles themselves, and the second to Timothy brings St. Paul to the time of his departure after his second imprisonment. In the choice of all these more difficult illustrative portions we must be guided by finding whether we take the majority of our scholars along with us. If, as some intelligent Bible classes will be, they are delighted to find that the Epistles are veritable letters, and to have these portions explained, the more that can be done in that way the better. If, on the other hand, it be found that nothing fixes the attention of the audience but actual narrative, it will be wiser to omit all the didactic parts of the Epistles, and only turn up a passage here and there by way of reference, when required to complete the history.

7. A Model Lesson on the Accident of Eutychus.—Read Acts xx. 2-12. The three months spent in Greece must have been the visit promised in the Corinthians—since Corinth was the capital of the province called Greece. Refer to 1 Cor. xvi., and show how St. Paul had made collections for the poor at Jerusalem, according to his promise to SS. Peter and James mentioned in Gal. ii. 10. It may be shown by reference to Acts iv, why these Christian Jews

at Jerusalem were peculiarly dependent upon such alms. Indeed, from the testimony of a modern Jew, it seems that Jews resident at Jerusalem have long thought they had a right to be maintained by their trading brethren dispersed through the world, and these Jews, though Christians, seem to have expected the same. No doubt, other lessons will have shown the peculiar hatred of the unconverted Jews of Macedonia and Asia Minor towards St. Paul, and also the difference between a Greek, a man of Greek birth, and a Grecian, or Jew bred up in a Greek city. The map must show the route from Corinth through Macedonia. St. Paul's ultimate destination was Jerusalem. From the 16th of Corinthians it may be seen what feast he wished to keep at Jerusalem. It would be well to remind the learners that as long as the Temple stood, all devout Jewish Christians followed the ritual, and that the three feasts were still to be observed by them. We may draw out here what Pentecost had become to a Christian, and how these companions of St. Paul must have looked forward at once to the Sabbath Week of Ingathering and to the Christian Pentecost in the Upper Room. There is interest in tracing these companions sent in charge from the various Churches: Sopater, from the noble Jews of Berea, and who had lately greeted the Romans, Aristarchus from Thessalonica, who shared his imprisonment (Col. iv. 10), Timothy from Lystra, Luke and Titus from Antioch, and two Ephesians, whose names are already known as his messengers and deacons. It should be explained (if it have not been shown long before) that there was no packet-service, and even Roman governors and soldiers took passages on board merchant-ships; so the party had to separate in order to obtain passages, or else because of the Jews lying in wait. The envoys then went on and waited at Troas, while St. Paul, and St. Luke (as shown by the pronoun) spent their Easter at Philippi. St. Paul's former visit and special love to the Philippians may be brought forward; then Troas be shown as the resting-place of travellers between

Macedon and Asia Minor. 'The first day of the week' should be noticed as evidence of the Christian Sunday or Lord's Day; the meeting at night, for fear of persecution. 'They were met together to break bread,' that is, for their Lord's Day Communion; but observe, they did not begin with it at night. They watched through the night, with St. Paul preaching, as one saying what might be his last words to them. The upper room would be, in an eastern town, just under the flat roof; the windows would be closed only with wooden shutters; and, as it was crowded and full of lights, the heat would be great; and this caused Eutychus, seated in the window, to be borne down with sleep (R.V.) and over-balance himself, and fall into the court below. It does not seem needful to decide whether he was actually killed, or only senseless, but at any rate he perfectly revived under the hand of St. Paul, and after some time longer of prayer, praise, and preaching, the 'breaking of bread' took place, and in the early morning the assembly separated. Some of the party then embarked; but a reference to the map will show how the vessel had to double the promontory of Cape Leucium, and St. Paul was thus able to spend a few more hours at Troas, by walking across to meet the ship at Assos. The chief lessons to be enforced are on the Sunday worship, the Christian Communion, and the tenderness with which the youth's infirmity is treated, marking the difference between weakness and wilful irreverence.

8. A model lesson on the Epistle to Philemon.—

The students will probably have fresh in their minds the description of St. Paul at Rome awaiting the coming of his accusers from Jerusalem for his trial, while dwelling in his own hired house with a soldier chained to him. We see who was here his companion in the greeting, and if needful, evidences of Timothy's faithfulness might be found. Explain the form of ancient letters, beginning with the signature of the writer. Then let the greeting be read as far as the third verse, and refer to the note at the end (which is

here correct, though these notes are not always trustworthy). Colosse should be found in the map, not far from Ephesus. It should be explained that though there is no record of St. Paul's visiting it, he probably did so during his three years at Ephesus, and most likely lodged in the house of the wealthy Greek Philemon, whom he must, judging by v. 19, have converted. Apphia was Philemon's wife, Archippus their son, who was a priest or a deacon, as appears from Col. iv. 17. Here remark St. Paul's courtesy, administering a warning to Archippus, not through his father, but through the ministers of the Church of Colosse, to whom the letter was sent by the same opportunity. The Church in their house should be shown to be the ordinary apostolic way of mentioning the Christian family, often very numerous, consisting of many married slaves and their children. It might be well to bring in how the large halls of the wealthier Christians served for the first places of assembly, and how there is actual evidence of this in the Church of St. Pudenciana at Rome. Then explain the condition of the slaves of a Roman or Greek household, always called servants in the New Testament ; how they were the absolute property of their master, who could ill-use and kill them without mercy. Anecdotes might be given of girls cruelly beaten for awkward hair-dressing, or the famous story of the epicure who had his fish fed with refractory slaves ; a runaway was generally put to death, often crucified. And these slaves were not all negroes, but came from all parts of the world, Jews, Greeks, Egyptians, Germans, Britons, often more learned and able than their masters, and were often their scribes, librarians, and teachers of their sons. Christianity has gradually worked the freedom of slaves, but it did not begin by loosening all ties, but only by making each man do his duty better in his actual station. There was no difference spiritually (see Col. iii. 11), but masters and slaves were taught how to act towards one another (Col. iii. 22 to iv. 1), and the teaching instructs not merely slaves only (Eph. vi. 5), but

all servants. Thus St. Paul, while teaching in Philemon's house, must have seemed wonderfully good and kind to the slaves, although he did not then succeed in converting them all. By and by Onesimus seems to have done some damage to his master's property, and to have run away. He came to St. Paul in his captivity at Rome, and there was converted to the faith (verse 10). But this did not make St. Paul think him free from his duty to his master. No. According to 1 Cor. vii. 20-22, Onesimus was free with the highest freedom, and so he was to prove by willingly submitting himself to Philemon at all risks. (It might sometimes add to the interest if the integrity of Uncle Tom and modern slaves like him were pointed out as prompted by this great Christian principle. 'Whose service is perfect freedom.') But St. Paul provides for his safety, sending with him Tychicus, an Ephesian companion (see previous lesson), and recommending him to the Church of Colosse (Col. iv. 7, 8, 9), while to Philemon himself the Apostle writes a letter, which is preserved as the most perfect example of consideration and courtesy in such an expostulation and interference. There is his commendation of Philemon himself, given in the form of thanksgiving to God for what has been heard of him. Then comes the request. It might have been a command as from one having apostolical authority over a convert to bid him do what was convenient, *i.e.* suitable and proper, but he prefers to entreat for love's sake, as an old man and a prisoner for Christ's sake. Thus does he intercede for 'his son, Onesimus, begotten in his bonds,' once, it seems, a useless, unprofitable slave, but now ready to be a blessing to both his master and to the Apostle. St. Paul had sent him back to be received as one dearly beloved by himself. Willingly would he have kept his new convert, and have enjoyed his services, but mindful of the master's rights he had made restitution a part of the repentance of the runaway. (Here may be shown the great duty of insisting on the right being done, at all costs, before any supposed advantage

can follow.) It may be, St. Paul says, that the flight of Onesimus, in his heathen ignorance, was destined to render him a beloved brother for ever. If he had been guilty of injuring or stealing his master's goods, the Apostle undertakes to compensate for all ; writing it, as matter of business, with his own hand, although, indeed, Philemon might be said to owe his own self and soul to him. Then comes the final enforcement of the entreaty, and the hope held out of a visit to Colosse and to Philemon's house. The greetings, too, should be noticed : Epaphras was himself a Colossian, and the two evangelists, SS. Luke and Mark, may be believed to be with him, St. Mark having repented of his weakness at Perga, and having become 'profitable to the ministry' (2 Tim. iv. 11). Demas's fall may also be traced in 2 Tim. iv. 10. It may further be said that there is every reason to believe that Philemon readily complied with the request thus delicately though earnestly urged, and that Onesimus not only was freed but finally became third Bishop of Ephesus, while Archippus is said to have been Bishop of Laodicea.

9. Head-quarters of the Mission Work of the Acts.—It will be seen that in teaching on the Acts the mind should be clear as to the advancing centres of action of the missionary work. The Apostles began from Jerusalem. The dispersion at Stephen's death led to the preaching at Samaria, Joppa, Lydda, Cæsarea, and other parts of Palestine. Then Antioch became the centre whence the Christian teaching was carried out to the East and West ; and Corinth, somewhat later, was the head-quarters of European missions, while Ephesus was so of those of Asia Minor. The situation of Corinth as the half-way house, so to speak, of travellers from Rome to Asia, who crossed the isthmus rather than coast round the perilous capes of the Peloponnesus, made it eminently suitable as a place whence to spread the Gospel ; and it is plain that St. Paul had there made many Roman friends, to whom he sends greetings.

CHAPTER V.

STUDY AND PREPARATION.

1. **Need of Diligence.**—It will be said such teaching as this may be very good, but what an amount of knowledge and study it must require ! That is quite true. To do such work—the highest in the world—with any sort of efficiency requires the full stretch of the faculties, whatever they are. God will be served with *all our mind*, whatever the capacities of that mind may be ; and if we undertake, in our measure, to feed His sheep or His lambs, it is not to be done by throwing unprepared food at them, and leaving them to swallow it as they may ; but by using our best skill and labour to make it pleasant and profitable to them. If we simply get such a subject as the healing of Bartimæus droned through, and then begin by asking, in an uninterested way, ‘Who came to be healed ? What was he to be healed of ? To whom did he come ? What did he prove by coming ? What is faith ? What must we have if we would be saved ?’—we have done what is very easy to ourselves, but what is not as likely to impress the children as if we try to make them realise the dusty roadside, the blind beggar, the trampling feet, the asking what brought the crowd, the effort to struggle forward, the doubting hope whether the Stranger could indeed heal, the trust rising at the sound of the Holy Voice, the cry confessing Him the Master, the joy of the restored sight, and thus showing what was the faith and acknowledgment needed for the cure. Longfellow’s poem of ‘Blind

Bartimæus' would help at least the teacher to realise and reproduce the point.

2. Means of Preparation.—One who has no other help can do much by diligent thought and study of the Scripture itself: looking up parallel passages, and tracing the history of the persons mentioned, meditating on the Holy Word, and, indeed, treating it in the manner described in the 1st Psalm and the collect for the second Sunday in Advent. This, of course, is the means above all others, and countless are the numbers who have thus been led in the way of salvation; but there is need of guidance, especially if we are to be teachers as well as learners; and some of this comes to us, as Church people, in the creeds, the fasts and festivals, and the choice of portions of Scripture for them, all of which definitely point our way to the lessons to be gathered; and it is an absolute duty to God, to ourselves, and our pupils to take advantage of every help that comes in our way. 'The Teacher's Bible' is one of these helps, with its references, maps, explanatory notes, and brief summary of much of the information needful to the most surface comprehension of the narrative. Another such help is 'The Revised Version of the New Testament.' It should be regarded as an assistance to our own understanding, and to look over a passage in it beforehand should be somewhat of the same assistance to a teacher as the reading it in Greek is to a clergyman. But where a difference is discovered, the teacher should beware of roundly asserting, as if he had made a great discovery, that the ordinary Authorised Version 'is wrong.' He does not really know how authorities have been balanced, and meanings weighed, or how much there is to be said on either side for passages where there are important alterations or omissions, beyond the frequent change in *tenses*, which, though important to the learned, hardly strike an ordinary reader. It is quite desirable to embody his discovery in his teaching, as we have shown in the instance of St. Barnabas's name; but a person who

broadly called 'the son of consolation' a mistake, would forget that consoling and exhorting lie near together, and would damage the authority of Scripture to minds that cannot understand all that the questions depend on, such as antiquity of manuscripts, and delicate points of grammar and meaning. To give another instance in Acts xxi. 13 : many a reader, finding that 'we took up our carriages' is transformed into 'we took up our baggage,' and discovering that St. Paul and his band of disciples did not travel in chariots, but walked with bundles on their backs, will imagine that King James's translators were ignorant, whereas the truth is that they knew perfectly well the state of the case. In the English Bible before theirs, St. Luke is made to say, 'We took up our fardels,' and they altered the word to carriages because it was going out of use, and the other term then expressed what a traveller carried instead of what carried him. Here it is our language that has altered, not the old translators who were mistaken. Again, in the case of St. John viii. 1-8, the doubt is whether the narrative was really first written by St. John the Evangelist, not whether the event happened, nor whether the passage may be reckoned as part of the Word of Life. It is like the last chapter of Deuteronomy, which no one ever supposed to be written by Moses, but which has not the less authority on that account. The teacher should, therefore, inform himself from the revision, but never speak slightly of the old one.

3. **Helps to Preparation.**—Lessons ready-made are to be had. There are questions on selected passages put forth by the National Society, the Christian Knowledge Society, the Sunday School Institute, and in 'The Monthly Paper of Sunday Readings.' They show a beginner how questions may be framed, and are sometimes useful to hold in the hand and refer to for suggestions ; but if *vivâ voce* teaching is to be alive and vigorous, it must be adapted at every moment to the needs of the actual class. Also, there are

outlines of lessons, in which the teacher finds the requisite information about the facts, and is directed to the texts and prophecies needed for illustration, and the religious lesson to be deduced. Such are very valuable to those who have access to nothing beyond a compendium, and are often useful in guiding those who can get other books in preparing a lesson—preparing, I say, for if the teacher goes off to the Sunday-school with his book of outlines in his bag unlooked at, in the security that it will spare him all trouble, his teaching will be—or will soon become—bald, confused, and worthless. The subject must be mastered before it can be communicated. The outline lessons of the National Society or of the Sunday School Institute should be read over, the texts looked out, and the substance gathered up ; and the teacher will then be able to give a well-digested lesson from them. The comments at the end of each portion of C. M. Yonge's 'Scripture Readings on Gospel Times and Apostolic Times' are meant for the same purpose of collecting information and illustration, while the arrangement of portions may assist the teacher in choosing those best adapted for lessons to a class.

4. **Comments.**—But the teacher has to prepare himself as well as his lesson, and is in danger of being dry and jejune, if he have only the knowledge or thoughts suggested by some such manual. He must read for himself, and gather some general knowledge. Dr. Maclear's 'Classbook of the New Testament' is excellent for giving a general view ; Mitchell's 'Gospel Story' gives a little more detail and application ; Canon Peter Young's 'Daily Readings' go still further. The S.P.C.K. commentary, or 'The Speaker's Commentary,' may be consulted on individual passages, or the Rev. Isaac Williams's beautiful books on 'The Study of the Gospels.' We do not want to terrify teachers or school managers with thinking that they must need all of these ; we suggest most as alternatives to one another as subjects of home study where they can be pro-

cured, and we *do* think that every teacher should have read, at the very least, Maclear's Classbook, and have access to the S.P.C.K. Commentary.

5. **Books on Special Points.**—Each teacher should go on studying. Home devotional reading will be no small help to Sunday teaching, and they will often work together. It will be well here to mention what aids there are for special periods. And first, while owning the charm and beauty of many parts of Canon Farrar's 'Life of Christ' and 'Life of St. Paul,' we would warn against the using them as guides, or, indeed, as more than occasional assistances in external details of description ; since there is a certain amount of the dangerous spirit of the age in both, and more in the second than in the first. Everything with the rationalising taint should be carefully avoided by those who have not special training enough to meet the fallacies therein. The devotional side such as is found in Jeremy Taylor's great old book (the 'Life of Christ') is the only safe one on which to approach our Master. Dean Goulburn's beautiful 'Gospel of the Infancy' is a safe well to draw from for thoughts on the Holy childhood. Sermons on St. John the Baptist, the Baptism, Fasting and Temptation, simple in diction, but ineffably deep in thought, may be found among those of the Rev. John Keble. Bishop Moberly's 'Sermons on the Beatitudes,' Archbishop Trench on the 'Parables' and on the 'Miracles,' Miss Sewell's 'Thoughts for the Holy Week,' Canon King's 'Meditations on the Last Seven Words,' Bishop Moberly's 'Great Forty Days' are all books that will deepen our tone of mind in dealing with these holy mysteries. Afterwards we have as guides Dean Goulburn's 'Acts of the Deacons,' and Conybeare and Howson's 'St. Paul,' two books which help us nearly through the Acts. For further aids, we would mention some admirable papers of the late Canon Ashwell ; in the 'Readings on the Books of the Bible' in Mozley's Monthly Paper, as we have already mentioned, are some

most wise and excellent papers of his upon the Four Gospels and on the Book of Revelation. 'The Pupils of St. John' will also be an assistance; and, to the more advanced readers, so is Archbishop Trench's 'The Epistles to the Seven Churches.' Besides these there are, of course, an endless number of sermons, explanations, meditations, &c., from each of which the reader will carry off some idea that will become either directly available or work into that general spiritual culture which tells the most of all.

6. **Historical Information.**—The books mentioned above are mostly directed to the religious teaching from the Scripture, though such a book as Conybeare and Howson's 'St. Paul' endeavours to embrace all possible aspects, history, scenery, antiquarianism, and the like. Whatever we can collect in that way has great value to ourselves and to our pupils, though it is far from being the great point. We much regret that the historical training of pupil teachers is so much confined to English history, that there is no room to give them any general knowledge of the condition of the ancient world, such as is really necessary to intellectual comprehension of the Testament. For a brief summary in a cheap form perhaps 'the Chosen People' may answer best, and Maclear's Classbook also gives the required information. Both the above mentioned explain the Herod family, the Roman power, and the Greek influence sufficiently to render the sacred narrative comprehensible, but we should by all means recommend our teachers to read Josephus's 'Wars of the Jews,' or else Prideaux's 'Connection of the Old and New Testament,' or Milman's 'History of the Jews,' both of which are in fact Josephus commented on in modern language, with a few lights from other sources. Church's 'Siege of Jerusalem' (Nisbet) gives the final scene most ably, but does not go far enough back for an explanation of the complicated system of governments that followed in Palestine on the death of Herod the Great, and which the Evangelists

treat as a matter of course, expecting every one to understand the conflicting jurisdictions of Pilate, Herod, and the Sanhedrim. That every word they say agrees with this system is one remarkable evidence of their veracity. We may mention the fact of the presence of Pilate's wife. Roman procurators had been forbidden by Augustus to take their wives with them, but permission had been given by Tiberius. A secular history of Rome, if not of Greece, also should be read in order to give some largeness of view in studying the Acts. Bible Cyclopædias, admirable and valuable as they are in bringing information to bear on individual points, especially on obscure ones, cannot supply the place of general culture. We do not wish by any means to frighten those who have no books, no time, no opportunities; but we do wish to persuade those who have these to make their general reading useful, and not think the merest fragment of their minds and intelligence sufficient for the comprehension of the everlasting Gospel. Some Church history will, of course, be further needed to gather together the gleanings from the Epistles. Perhaps the most available is Crake's 'History of the Church,' and there is a pretty book by Mrs. Clare, called 'Lives of the Apostles,' which may assist some who have no access to fuller histories.

7. Customs and Scenery.—The S.P.C.K. books on 'Scripture Manners and Customs' and 'Scripture Topography' are good manuals, but the latter is in some respects a little obsolete. Dr. Edersheim's 'Jewish Social Life in the Time of Christ,' and his 'Temple and its Services in the Time of Our Lord' (Religious Tract Society), are more valuable, bringing Jewish knowledge to bear upon the subject, and throwing many most remarkable lights on it. For instance, we find that the shepherds on the hills of Bethlehem were watching the flocks kept for sacrifice. We also learn that the 'tables of the money-changers and the seats of them that sold doves' commanded a heavy rent, and that the tax paid on the exchange for the half shekel of the

sanctuary was enormous, so that the vested interest attacked by our Lord on two occasions was considerable. This further accounts for the vehement hostility of the Sanhedrim. Canon Tristrem's 'Holy Land,' and Thompson's 'Land and Book' are thoroughly safe books. Dean Stanley's chapter on Galilee and its lake in his 'Sinai and Palestine' is one of his best pieces of writing, but in dealing with Jerusalem there comes in the distressing and confusing controversy about the localities of the sacred spots, and the doubt whether tradition marks the right ones. Captain Palmer, distinguished in Palestine exploration, accepts the present spots, and accounts for their actual appearance by their history, and we would accept this decision; but those who read modern travels in the Holy Land must be prepared to pick out that which really conduces to profit, from much of weary argument, and sometimes of disdain of the opposite views. It is the penalty of 'the tide of crime that swept His Footsteps from the favoured clime.'

8. **Difficulties.**—There is another class of difficulties, not serious ones to most honest and loving minds; but really perplexing to some persons, and occasionally suggested to a child by some shrewd caviller at home as a question wherewith to puzzle a teacher. Such is the name of the priest who gave David the shew-bread, or who was the Zacharias who was slain between the temple and altar, why St. Stephen spoke of Abraham's sepulchre as at Shechem, and what is meant by being baptized for the dead. These have been difficulties from the very first, and have perplexed ancient commentators as much as modern ones. Most comments give various suggestions as to the way they arose, and we may give these explanations, frankly avowing the difficulty. Thus Abiathar's name may have been inserted by a copyist because he was better known than his father. Or he may have taken the more prominent part in giving the bread to David. Anyway, the argument of the sentence is not in the least affected by the name of the priest. Again, if the Zachariah murdered by Joash be the person intended,

Barachiah may have been his grandfather, or ancestor. If it be the prophet Zechariah, we know nothing about the manner of his death, and he certainly did come at the close of the roll of the prophets. Or again, Zacharias, the father of the Baptist, is said to have been slain in the temple shortly before these words were spoken, and this is the more probable explanation. St. Stephen seems to have been massing together his account of the Israelites. Joseph certainly, probably together with his brothers, was buried at Shechem, in the ground won by Jacob; Jacob himself was buried in Abraham's purchase, the Cave of Macpelah. In any case, the general drift of the martyr's words was to show the faith that looked forward to the future inheritance in the Promised Land. Whether St. Stephen, in the tumultuous assembly, made a slip of the tongue, or whether the abridgment were intentional or the copyist were in fault, really is of no moment. In the same way a prophecy of Zechariah is said to be spoken by Jeremiah, but this may be explained by the fact that Jeremiah had begun the prophecy which was developed by his successor. Or, as another explanation, the book containing all the prophecies subsequent to Isaiah is said to have been called by the name of Jeremiah. The 'baptizing for the dead' is a more perplexing expression. Even in very early times it was a difficulty, and in some instances, when a person died unbaptized, another hidden close by him was baptized in his stead, but this practice was given up as evidently arising from a misunderstanding. It seems likely that St. Paul may have meant that baptism was altogether with a view to the new life beyond the grave, and would be vain if there were no resurrection. Or, as it has also been suggested, that as each soldier of the militant Church passes away another is baptized, so as to close up the ranks. In all such instances, it is well to impress that though the difficulty is undoubtedly there, it is no doubt caused by an ignorance or half knowledge, and that if we understood more it would be cleared away.

CHAPTER VI.

SUNDAY EPISTLES AND GOSPELS.

1. Teaching of Gospels and Epistles for Sundays.

—Hitherto we have spoken only of direct narrative-teaching following the course of chronology, but there are other plans which may be used either conjointly with this or instead of it. The course of the Christian year may be followed with the Epistles and Gospels, and indeed this ought to be done wherever it is practicable. If the week-day school teaches chronologically, on Sunday this system may be adopted, managing, if possible, that the Epistles for the Sundays should be under consideration while the life of our Lord is being read in the week, and the Sunday Gospels while the Acts are in hand, so that neither may be dropped out of memory. We should take these portions one by one, and as it were *turn on the microscope* upon them, treating them in the utmost detail, and especially connecting them with the Christian season, and where it is possible, with the collect and the lessons for the day. It would be well if they were learnt by heart, for they may be viewed as the portions which the Church has specially selected for meditation; and not merely our own English Church, for they are identical in Scotland and America, and with very few exceptions throughout the Western Church and among Lutherans. The choice was made in the Sacramentary of St. Gregory the Great, and all these have retained them. Thus in dwelling on them we are in communion with the greater part of the Christian world; and though it is not possible to exhaust

their store, we can connect with them thoughts that may be recalled to our pupils when they hear them again in the after stages of their lives.

2. **Recurrence.**—Most of the Sunday Gospels are so easy in one point of view that quite little children may become familiar with their surface meaning, but to make them recur in successive years without giving a sense of wearisome repetition is the difficulty of inexperienced and shallow teachers, who do not add anything in the meantime to their own knowledge, spiritual or intellectual. It may be wise, as has been said, to alternate the minute teaching on the Gospels and Epistles in different years, or even to take three years, before recurring to the same piece as the direct object of study, though making the Collect the means of reviving the teaching of both.

3. **Connection.**—It may here be well to give an instance of the sort of teaching that I mean, taking the Twentieth Sunday after Trinity. The little child will of course easily understand the prayer of the Collect against all things that may hurt us, and will need to be told the meaning of 'bountiful' and 'accomplish,' to be made to define body and soul, and to be helped to find instances of being ready in both, to do what God would have us to do. The teacher should make clear the meaning of 'wouldest have done,' which the scholars are sure to think signifies 'what God would Himself have done in our place.' It is not a hurtful misunderstanding; but, being wrong, needs to be corrected into 'what He wills us to do,' pointing to 'Thy will be done in earth;' and then make the children show how the guests in the parable were unready, the clause in the Lord's Prayer being also brought in. At the same age, the story of the feast can be questioned *into* and out of them, and they can either be taught the lesson first against false excuses, or be told that they have been arrayed in the garment of purity, and must keep it pure and clean for the feast to which they are bidden. The Collect should

be referred to again as a prayer for *readiness* both in body and soul : in body unlike the scornful guests, in soul unlike the man without the garment. The picture cards for each Sunday published by the S.P.C.K. may be made very helpful.

4. **Advanced Teaching.**—The years have gone round and the children may have learnt more and more about the Gospel. Some will be ready to receive all that we can tell them. First there may be the observation that the special thought and point of the Sunday is the being ready for the Marriage Feast. Then, if the Gospel be the especial subject, there should be a reference to the time and place of its being given, among the four parables of judgment after the final silencing of the Scribes and Pharisees in the Temple, and it should be compared with the similar parable given in Zaccheus's house a few days previously, and forming the Gospel for the second Sunday. The class will probably have been already instructed in the external aspect of an Eastern wedding feast, and have had the first application made with reference to the Exhortation to the reluctant comers to the Holy Communion, and there will be this groundwork to go upon. Now, however, they may be shown that the first intention, so to speak, of the earlier portion of the parable is the rejection of the Divine message by the Jews, and in extension to the Gentiles, with the words 'those murderers,' seeming to refer to the previous parable of the Wicked Husbandmen. The historical meaning of the parable may be carried on to the invitation given at first by the messengers, and then to the universal compulsion, corresponding to the general habit of Infant Baptism without choice on the part of those thus admitted. Then follows the more personal application, with first the explanation of the Eastern custom of distributing festal garments to invited guests, and showing that those from the highways and hedges would only by their own fault, be unfit to appear. The glorious, mystical descriptions of the feast in Psalm xlv. should be referred

to, and the white raiment in Rev. iii. 4-5. Then there should be every endeavour to make all realise that we are invited guests, clad in the wedding garment, bound to be ready in body (taking warning by the first set of guests) and in soul (here admonished by the man without a wedding garment), and going on our way as described in the Epistle, circumspectly, that we may not soil, tear, or lose our baptismal robe of innocence, yet joyously, speaking to ourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, using heartily the prayer that we may cheerfully accomplish our duty by the Divine aid, and thus be ready both in body and soul.

5. The Epistle for the Twentieth Sunday after Trinity.—In like manner, in instructing a class on the Epistle, I would put the idea of the wedding feast prominently before them, and call upon them to look on themselves as guests, bidden to the eternal banquet, provided with the white garments which have to be guarded, and with the way marked out for them, as in Isaiah xxxv. 8, 9, 10. These wayfaring travellers on their way to the Marriage Supper are then addressed in the Epistle, even as the Collect is their prayer. See then, ye wedding guests, that ye walk circumspectly (carefully, in the R. V.), remembering that though

The waymarks sure
On every side are round us set,
Soon overleaped but not obscure,
'Tis ours to mark them or forget ;

it is only too easy to forget them. No lion nor ravenous beast can harm us *on* the way, but all around are snares, and the roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Therefore, walk circumspectly—not foolishly or heedlessly—redeeming the time, eagerly making the most of it, buying up the opportunity, as a tradesman would buy up an article that he knew would soon run short. This same one opportunity will never again occur; if we are not ready in body and mind to accomplish what God would have us do, we

shall never have the same chance. Another is possible, but not the same. We must make the most of each chance for good, buying back each day for good, though it be in bondage to evil.

Though days are evil and as slaves
Sold under bondage be,
Yet can they be redeemed and freed
By faith, O Lord, in Thee.
The soldier's armour, who with chains
Did the Apostle bind,
Supplied a text on which he preached
A sermon to mankind.

These verses (of the poem for the day in Bishop Christopher Wordsworth's 'Holy Year') show how every event of life is susceptible of being thus made the most of and serving for a step onward in our heavenly way. Then, though invited guests in festal raiment must walk carefully and swiftly (there may here be a reference to the Ten Virgins and their lamps), they must also go joyfully, but in all moderation. The 'Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess' (or riot) may be treated according to the probable temptations of the scholars, either literally, or as enjoining that our cheerfulness be not sensual, thoughtless mirth. A lesson on Christian joy may here follow—our right to be joyful, because Christ is risen, and 'your joy no man taketh from you,' and we, as 'the ransomed of the Lord, have everlasting joy upon our heads,' and 'the joy of the Lord is our strength' (Neh. viii. 10). 'Rejoice evermore, and again I say unto you, rejoice;' but the joy should find expression in 'psalms and hymns and spiritual songs' as in St. James—'Is any merry, let him sing psalms,' but if we cannot do so outwardly, at any rate we can make melody in our hearts by the constant spirit of thanksgiving. And this joy is to be kept up by always submitting to one another, in the temper of love and humility. And here not only may it be pointed out how bickerings and quarrels destroy the

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peace and unity of the great procession, and may cause stains and rents in the wedding robes, but it may be shown by reference to St. Luke xiv., the Gospel for the Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity, that those who seek the foremost places here are not those who will be admitted to the heavenly Supper. Thus the force of the prayer will be seen, that we, being *ready* both in body and soul, may *cheerfully* accomplish that which it is God's will that we should do.

It is always well, in teaching about the Epistles, to begin by showing when and where they were written, and, in the case of special Churches, the relation of St. Paul to them.

CHAPTER VII.

THE EPISTLES.

1. **Bible Classes.**—While children are still at school, their minds cannot be ripe for learning more of the Epistles than the selections for the Sundays give them ; but pupil-teachers and Bible classes may sometimes be advanced enough to make it desirable to read an Epistle with them as a whole. The Epistles best adapted for this purpose are the Epistle of St. James, and those to the Ephesians and to the Hebrews.

2. **The Epistle of St. James** should be specially studied, because of its practical nature and its stern protest against many modern sins. It should be borne in mind that it was written when the Fall of Jerusalem was near at hand ; and though some authorities, including Canon Lightfoot, reject the tradition which makes the writer both the first Bishop of Jerusalem and the son of Cleopas and Mary, and refuse to believe the ordinary account of his martyrdom ; yet it may be permitted to mention the general belief, though not to affirm, that it was so, and say that St. James continued, as the head of the Jewish Christians, a faithful observer of the Law to the last. Some have also thought that the absence of open proclamation of the faith in Christ in this Epistle was in order to draw the Jews to see the higher way without offending them at once by the Name they refused. It would be a most profitable work to trace in this Epistle the developments of many a lesson of which the origin is found in the Sermon on the Mount and other discourses of our Blessed Lord. The teacher should be well prepared by working up beforehand with a good commentary.

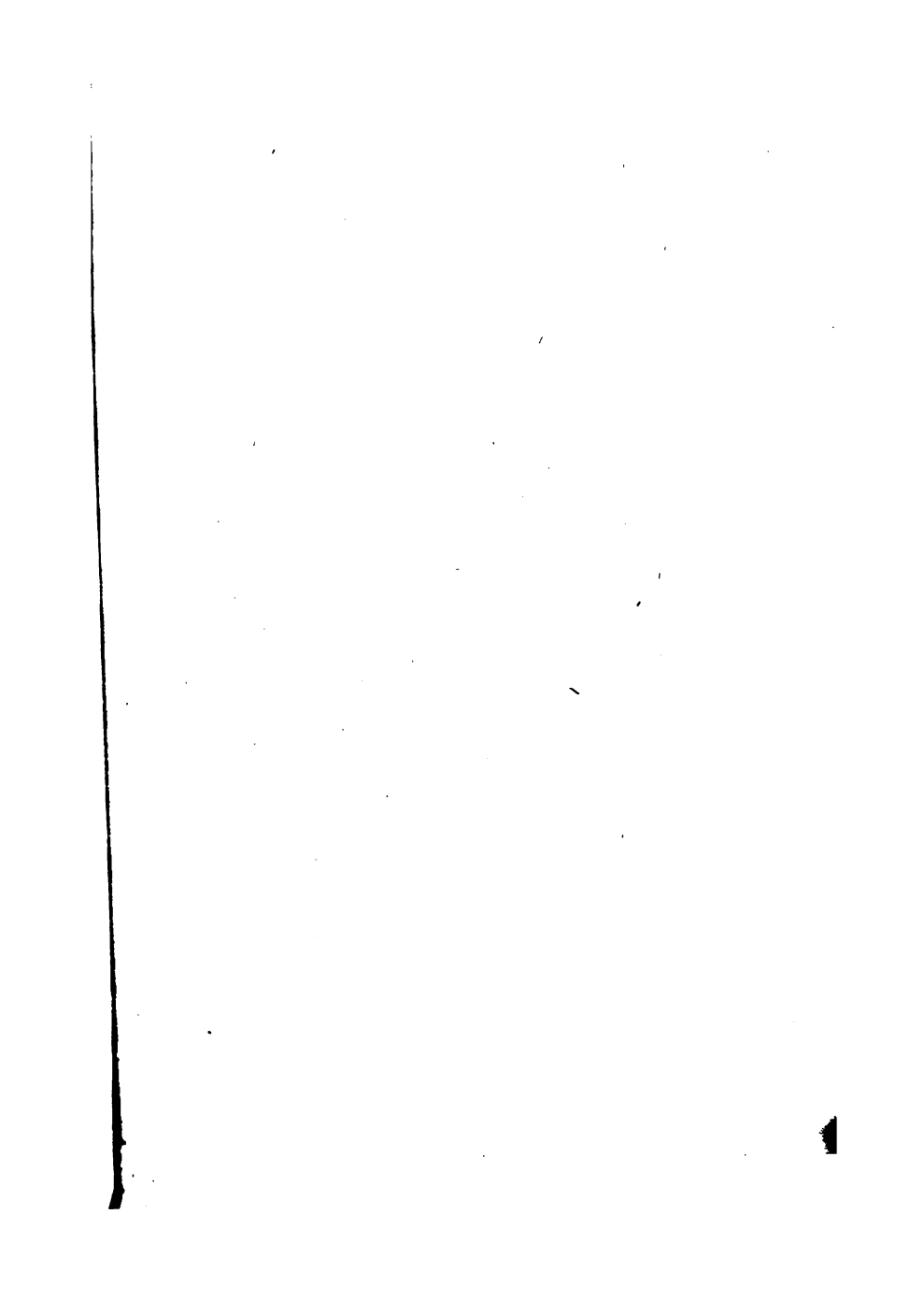
3. **The Epistle to the Ephesians.**—This, like the two Epistles that immediately follow it, is written to teach Christians to realise their own position and duties as members of a risen Lord. Of the three, this is the most suitable for teaching from, because it is more general than the other two, so that some have thought it intended for a general Epistle to the Churches of Asia, and that it may have been the letter which St. Paul directed to be borrowed from the Laodiceans to be read at Colosse. Thus, it goes less into the local troubles and errors of the Church addressed, and is of more universal application. To give strong individual interest, the copious notices of the Ephesian Church should be read from the Acts, and the message to it in the Revelation. The whole Epistle, however, should be gone through, with full bearing on ourselves and our own Church at the present day. The parallel passages on the condition of the Church, and the duties of Christians in their various stations, as beings leading a risen life, with their conversation in Heaven, may be compared, specially from the letters to the Romans and Colossians. This is the Epistle which seems, above all, to tend to the building up of Christians in the faith, and this, no doubt, is the reason that so large a proportion of the Epistles for Sundays comes from it.

4. **The Epistle to the Hebrews.**—This is, above all, the key to the Israelitish ritual ; and to read it with full references is a deeply interesting study, from which no one can fail to rise without a higher and deeper knowledge of the Christian system, culminating in the Atonement. The best comment to read with it is that in the S.P.C.K. Commentary. Perhaps it would be better, to begin with, in reading with an advanced class, than either of the other two Epistles, because of the backward light it casts upon the Old Covenant, and the continual comparison of the shadow with the substance.

5. **The other Epistles.**—We should scarcely advise any teachers of ordinary powers to undertake to direct the reading

of their pupils straight through the controversial Epistles, such as those to the Romans and Galatians. The question of liberty from the bondage of the Old Covenant occurs often in the Sunday Epistles, and there meets its explanation, that voluntary acceptance of the terms and obligations of the Old Covenant is virtually rejection of the New; and the endeavour to stand by our own strength without seeking the aid of the Holy Spirit as members of Christ, and without looking to the Atonement, is a return to the old bondage. This can be impressed when teaching on the Circumcision, the Fourth Sunday in Lent, &c. ; but there are few persons capable of leading a class safely through the difficulties in the Epistle to the Romans; and the less they perceive these same difficulties, the more likely they are to be led astray, like the candidate for Ordination who began by presenting Bishop Lonsdale with a treatise on 'Justification by Faith.' Something of the same applies to the Epistles to the Corinthians, where much perception of Church history is required to enter into all the points discussed. Some of the more noted passages either relate to St. Paul's personal history, or can be taken separately, such as the 13th and 15th chapters of the first Epistle, which are some of the most important of all the teachings of the New Testament, and should never be omitted. The 13th and part of the 15th are Sunday Epistles, and should be constantly referred to in all our teaching; indeed, the description of Christian love in the 13th ought to be committed to memory by every one. Reading to ourselves, or in the Lessons at church, is very different from the exposition required by a class, and which, in dealing with these Epistles, cannot be done safely without thorough theological training.

THE END.





the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are under 15 years of age has increased from 1.1 billion to 1.5 billion, and the number of people aged 65 and over has increased from 0.2 billion to 0.5 billion (United Nations 1999).

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the needs of the young and the old. The United Nations (1999) has identified the need to address the needs of the young and the old as one of the eight Millennium Development Goals. The United Nations (1999) has also identified the need to address the needs of the young and the old as one of the eight Millennium Development Goals. The United Nations (1999) has identified the need to address the needs of the young and the old as one of the eight Millennium Development Goals.

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